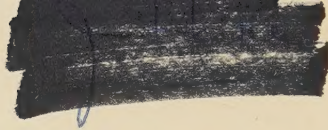


**THE STORY OF
THE CHURCH'S SONG**

MILLAR PATRICK



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1947

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**THE STORY OF
THE CHURCH'S SONG**

“The hymn-book reflects the history of the Church, embodies the doctrine of the Church, expresses the devotional feeling of the Church, and demonstrates the unity of the Church.”

W. M. TAYLOR, D.D.

THE STORY OF THE CHURCH'S SONG

BY THE
REV. MILLAR PATRICK, D.D.

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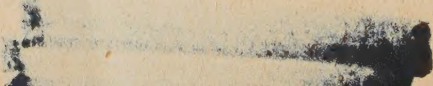
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THIS little book is intended to recount in summary fashion the story of the long development of Christian Hymnody, so far as it is illustrated by the contents of the revised *Church Hymnary*.

The writer was chairman of the little group of collaborators who prepared the *Handbook to the Church Hymnary*, edited by Dr Moffatt. He undertook to write the present book at the suggestion of the secretary of the Hymnary Revision Committee. These facts should absolve him from any suspicion of a design to push into the field with a rival to the official book.

To that book this one is really a complement. Within the limits of the *Handbook* it was impossible to include a continuous narrative setting its contents out in some kind of historical perspective. Without such a narrative, users of the wealth of material it offers are certain sometimes to feel that they cannot see the wood for the trees. The purpose of the present book is to make the forest visible, in something of its vast extent and almost bewildering variety, and at the same time to blaze a trail through it, so that those who wish to traverse step by step so much of its area as the *Church Hymnary* covers, may find the main track made plain, and have glimpses given them also of the innumerable alluring side-paths down which he who has time and interest may at his leisure make his way.

The story would not be complete without some account of the Metrical Psalms and the Scottish Paraphrases; chapters on these have therefore been introduced at the

proper place in the narrative. Nor would it be satisfactory without at least occasional glances at the progress of Church music, in its relevant forms ; an effort has accordingly been made, stage by stage, to relate that fascinating story to the other.

The book does not profess to be anything but superficial : the field to be covered and the limits of the space make that inevitable. But it may the better for that reason serve as a general introduction to the study of Hymnody for individual readers who wish to take a first glance over the field. The writer hopes that it may be serviceable also to those who wish to introduce others—classes of young people, for example—to the subject ; for such a purpose it may be useful to have the line of study blocked out in such divisions as the chapter headings and the captions indicate.

For the guidance of those who wish to be directed to the most useful literature on the subject, a Bibliography is appended. The books named in it will show from what sources the main substance of the present narrative has been derived.

The writer desires to express his deep indebtedness to his friend, the Rev. William T. Cairns, M.A., for much valuable suggestion and for a careful reading of the proofs.

EDINBURGH, *September 1927*

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I

THE CHURCH'S FIRST HERITAGE OF SONG : THE PSALMS

THE Church of Christ sprang from the Church of the Old Testament : its roots run deep into Jewish soil. In its beginnings it was wholly Jewish in character and spirit. Its adherents continued to worship, in synagogue and temple, with those who held most tenaciously to their ancestral faith and ritual. The Psalter, therefore, naturally became its first book of praise, and, for a time, was sufficient for its purposes. This original hymn-book of Christianity has furnished the basic element, and the most highly valued, in the Church's worship-song ever since.

Music among the Hebrews.—Music was held in high estimation among the Hebrews. The great place accorded to it in their ceremonial worship shows that the spirit of it had already entered deeply into the soul of the people. This is borne out by the many references in the historical books and the prophecies of the Old Testament to songs which evidently had a recognised place in social life and custom. Festivals such as that of harvest-tide, ceremonies such as marriage, appear to have had their appropriate songs associated with them. Some of the melodies of these songs seem to have come to be used even in the temple-worship. When Luther and others later, casting about for tunes to which to set attractively the new songs for the people, laid their hands on well-known folk-airs which they could adapt to such a use, they had probably the best of all precedents for

taking such a course, for some of the psalms have headings which suggest that they were directed to be sung to the melodies of familiar songs—"Hind of the dawn" and "Dove of the distant terebinths," for example.

Moreover, it is a fact of much significance that when at any time the prophets had occasion to warn the people of the consequences of the evil ways they were pursuing, they could find no more vivid figure to suggest the desolation that would come upon them than to say that there would then be no singing in the land. And on the other hand, when the calamities foretold had actually befallen, and the prophets wished to enhearten a people in whom the spirit of song had been silenced by their sorrows, the best way of inspiring them they could find was to promise that if they would forsake their evil ways and return unto the Lord, there would again be songs in the land, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

We are to regard the Jewish people therefore as lovers of music, having their songs for all occasions when the spirit instinctively turns to music for its most fitting form of utterance, and to think of their country as vocal with such melodies as the primitive condition of the musical art at that time allowed.

The Temple Worship in which the genius of the people found one of its highest expressions must have been extraordinarily impressive. The contributions King David made to the religious poetry of his people were matched by his organisation of the musical part of their religious ritual. It is claiming too much for him to ascribe to him the fully-developed organisation that existed in the days of the second temple; but his is the credit of having planted the root of which that elaborate ritual was the flower. The music used in it, even in its greatest days, was, by modern standards, crude. It is a mistake to suppose that, in their knowledge and practice

of the art, the Hebrews were more advanced than contemporary nations. "The music of the Hebrews was divine service, not art." The melodies were probably no more than a kind of recitative within a very narrow compass ; the cantillation of the modern Jewish synagogue is by some supposed to be a survival of it. Harmony was as yet unknown. The instrumental accompaniments must have been in unison or in the octave with the voices. The refinements of musical expression that are common-places to us had not yet entered into human imagination.

And yet, when we remember that there were three guilds of musicians in the service of the temple, and that the full muster of their members is reported to have numbered 4000 souls, it may be assumed that nothing was left undone of all that the finest artistry of the time could devise to heighten the effect of such music as was within the compass of their resources. If we imagine a great choir of disciplined singers chanting the psalms to an accompaniment by the two kinds of stringed instruments called the psaltery and the harp, with the flutes on occasion intervening ; if we think now of a solo voice leading, and answered by the choir, and again of choir answering choir in solemn antiphon ; if we conceive of the cymbals clanging to mark the time, and at the pauses the trumpets blaring, and, where the word *Selah* occurs, the voices ceasing altogether for an interval while the instruments provided an interlude—it is easy to understand how the souls of the worshippers must have been thrilled as they listened, and with what fervour they must have chimed in, where the ritual required it, with their responses of *Hallelujah*, or *Amen*, or, *For His mercy endureth for ever*. The singing, we are told, was shrill, and the instruments were clangorous, so that sometimes the sound of the song was heard in Jericho, about fifteen miles away. To modern ears, except those perhaps that find pleasure

in the "barbaric yawp" of jazz, the sound would be more of a joyful noise than music as we conceive it. But in those primitive days, to simpler souls, it would represent the same full majesty of worship-music as we discover in those most elevated forms of such music which thrill and exalt us now.

The music of those days has vanished; but the songs remain. *The Book of Psalms* as we know it was the service-book of the second temple; the psalms are the ritual-songs of the Jewish cult of that time. Originally, it would seem, there were five collections of them. At some time now unknown, these were brought together, much as modern hymn-books are, to form one liturgical manual for the people. Athanasius is our authority for the tradition that our selection of 150 was made out of 3000 which were in some degree of use when the choice took place. Whether his figures approximate to accuracy or not, the Psalter is an anthology culled from a great mass of religious songs, composed during a range of years as long as the period between Alfred the Great and the present century. Many hands must have been employed on the writing of them, and many more upon editorial changes. As it stands, the collection contains songs of so many periods that at the time when it was compiled the title given to a famous modern book—*Hymns Ancient and Modern*—might quite well have been given to it.

The Ritual Use of the Psalms can in many instances be determined. Many were intended for the worship of the community. Such were the Songs of Degrees, the pilgrim songs sung stage by stage on the way to Jerusalem by companies of worshippers travelling together thither; processional songs; national hymns, setting forth the historical reasons for the nation's believing what it did about the God whom it worshipped; songs for the great religious festivals. Others were intended for the use of

individuals, in the purely personal offices of religion, such as the payment of tithes, and the presentation of offerings in fulfilment of a vow. Some of the psalms are the liturgical hymns to accompany these personal votive offerings. "The correct liturgy is as important as the correct sacrificial ritual." And the correct liturgy is here.

Their Spiritual Value.—But the psalms enshrine much more than the ceremonial practice of an age long dead; they embody a living spirit of devotion. If their only concern had been with the outward forms of religion, they would have perished long ago. But from the first there was a deeper purpose in them. The ritual act loses its value when it ceases to be an aid to the spirit of man in his approach to God. The predominant interest of the Psalter, however, is not in the act, but in the spirit animating it—in the worshipper's attitude to God, in his conception of what is God's attitude to him, and in the adoration and devotion so inspired. It is this profoundly spiritual quality that gives the psalms their enduring vitality. They give expression to faiths, emotions, and experiences that are universal, and thus furnish a valid medium for the utterance of the worship of the human spirit in every age.

The whole music of the heart of man in its relation to God finds expression, and often supreme expression, in these songs of an ancient faith. "It often seems to me," said Athanasius, "that the psalms are for every one who sings them like a mirror of the soul, in which it can recognise its movements and express its feelings. For in this book thou findest the whole life of man pictured, the moods of the heart, the movement of the thought." Calvin put the same thing in another way: "I may truly call this book an anatomy of all the parts of the soul, for no one can feel a movement of the spirit which is not

reflected in this mirror. All the sorrows, fears, troubles, doubts, hopes, pains, perplexities, stormy outbreaks by which the hearts of men are tossed, have been here depicted by the Holy Spirit to the very life." The red blood of actual life runs throbbing through the whole book. Beneath its words the pulse can still be felt beating of the men who poured their emotions into them all those centuries ago. Their utterances give us a living voice for our sin and sorrow, our penitence and hope, our defeat and victory, our doubts and hesitations, our rising confidence and our triumphant faith in God. Here, said Heine, are "sunrise and sunset, birth and death, promise and fulfilment—the whole drama of humanity" in its relation to God. And as Herder said, "These flowers can be carried to every time and every soil, and they bloom in fresh youth. The book contains the simplest lyric notes for the expression of the most manifold feelings, and so it is a book of song for all ages."

Thus the Psalter naturally became the hymn-book of the Church from the beginning. The early Christian writings bear constant witness to the use made of it in private and public worship. In due time a distinctively Christian hymnody arose, but the psalms never lost their place of primacy. "If the faithful are keeping vigil in the church," said Athanasius in the fourth century, "David is first, middle, and last. At funeral processions and burials, David is first, middle, and last. In the holy monasteries, among the ranks of the heavenly warriors, David is first, middle, and last. In the convents of the virgins, who are imitators of Mary, David is first, middle, and last." "Of other Scriptures," wrote Theodore of Mopsuestia, "most men know nothing. But the psalms are repeated in private houses, in streets and market-places, by those who have learned them by heart, and feel the soothing power of their divine melodies." When

Paula and Eustochium wrote from Bethlehem to Marcella, they exhorted her to flee from the tumults and distractions of the capital to the solitude of Christ's village, saying, "Here is the quiet of country life, unbroken save by the chanting of the psalms. The ploughman, leaning on his plough-handle, sings them in his praises to God; the sweating reaper lightens his labours with the chanting of the psalms; the vine-dresser, as he prunes his vines, raises one of the songs of David. . . . The psalms are our poetry, our love-songs, our pastorals, our implements of husbandry." "Any one," said Ambrose, "possessed of his five wits, should blush with shame if he did not begin the day with a psalm, since even the tiniest birds open and close the day with sweet songs of holy devotion."

Ever since, the psalms have held their place in all branches of the Church of Christ. No single book of the Bible, not even the Gospels, has had so large a part in guiding and inspiring the devotions and quickening the faith of believers. It is the universal prayer-book, the most perfect manual of worship, the best-loved book of praise, throughout the whole Christian world.

II

HYMNS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

“THE Christian Church may be said to have started on its way singing.” In those dawn-days of the Faith, what was the nature of its song ?

The Gospels give us no guidance. Twice only do they mention singing. (1) They tell us that when our Lord made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday morning, He was greeted and acclaimed with the **Hosanna Hymn**. Literally, the word “Hosanna” means “Save now,” an appeal addressed to God. There has been much discussion as to its precise meaning as addressed to Jesus. It evidently signified an act of homage. Possibly the original sense of the word had become blurred with use, and it had come to mean no more than “Hail,” or “Glory to the Son of David.” Bishop Lightfoot suggested that the intention might be expressed in a paraphrase such as this : “Save us, we beseech Thee, O Thou (who dwellest) in the highest !” But it is surmised that the addition “in the highest” is a liturgical amplification, and that the authentic form of the salutation is that given in John xii. 13 : “Hosanna ! Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.” If this be the true form, all difficulty in interpretation disappears. (2) We are told that on the night before the Crucifixion, before our Lord and the Eleven went out, after the supper, to the Mount of Olives, they sang a hymn. Whatever else may be indeterminate in the details of that night’s events, one thing is luminously clear : we know precisely

what that hymn was. **The Great Hallel**, as it was called, consisting of Psalms 113-118, was the traditional Passover Hymn, the ritual song of the Paschal ceremony. It was customary to sing the first two of these six psalms before the feast, and the remaining four after it. The little upper room company must have heard these hymns sung many a time; and they were but conforming to ancient custom in singing, probably to a well-known melody, consecrated by immemorial use, the four psalms which were inseparably associated with the close of the Paschal feast.

Apostolic Times.—So long as the Christians continued to cling to the old observances of Judaism, the need for new forms of praise would not be acutely felt; the psalms would satisfy their requirements. But in some degree, from the first, the impulse must have been felt to seek new forms of expression for the new faith that had come to them and the emotions it aroused. A great and wonderful new world of truth had swum into the ken of those who had learned of Christ. New springs of emotion had been unsealed. The old channels were not sufficient to take in the heightened tide of feeling that surged up in their souls, pressing for a new way to rise to God in praise and adoration. New conduits had to be created. A new song had to be found to give adequate utterance to the new experience. There is never a new birth of the spirit that is not followed by a great outburst of singing, and the first breaking up of the deeps of the soul under the power of the Christian Gospel had this inevitable sequel. The spirit of song demanded freedom, and when expression was found for it, it uttered "a more thrilling note than tone or emotional speech had ever sounded before." As Dr T. R. Glover says, the early Christians "were the most essentially happy people of the day—they had 'become little children' as Jesus put it,

glad and natural. . . . Very soon a new note is heard in their words. Stoicism was never 'essentially musical'; Epictetus announces a hymn to Zeus, but he never starts the tune." But now the music begins to another theme. What were the first forms in which it found a voice?

1. **The Evangelical Canticles** (Hymns 714-717), known to us as the Magnificat, the Benedictus, and the Nunc Dimittis, are probably the earliest examples of Christian hymns. They are ascribed to Mary the Mother, Zacharias, and Simeon. But obviously the first two are inspired by older poems—the Magnificat by the song of Hannah in 1 Samuel ii. 1-10; the Benedictus by language used by the Old Testament prophets and by the eighteen Benedictions used in the temple service. They are too fixed in their forms to have been, as they stand, extemporised utterances. Probably they not only follow old models, but embody traditional material. The singers whose names they bear were steeped in the spirit and language of the devotional literature of their race, and it would be natural that their emotions should clothe themselves instinctively in words made familiar to them by much meditation and long devotional use. Alternatively, it may be that the substance of their spontaneous utterances is here, but that the language has passed through subsequent processes of treatment to bring it to a perfect finish and suit it to liturgical use. But, whatever their history, these hymns reflect the piety and devotion of the earliest Christian community in Palestine. They are soaked through and through with hallowed memories, transfused by Christian feeling into hymns whose purity of sentiment and beauty of expression have ever since secured their place in universal Christian use.

2. **Fragments of Primitive Hymns** are believed by scholars to be embedded in various places in the New Testament. These fall into two classes.

(1) *Doctrinal or Liturgical*.—Many of the members of primitive congregations were illiterate, and there was need that some set forms should be provided for giving expression to the faith that was in them, both for their own private devotional use, and for their participation in the common worship. In every age the Church's understanding of its faith needs to be crystallised in some form of creed, for its own confirmation, for the establishing of its members in the truth, and for the uplifting of its banner in the eyes of the world. Some of the earliest of its credal formulas appear in these primitive hymns, couched in such phrasing as would, by its rhythmical character, cling to the memories and come readily to the tongues of worshippers.

a. From a hymn of penitence, apparently, probably a baptismal hymn, addressed to a new convert: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. v. 14.)

b. From a hymn on our Lord's Incarnation and Triumph: "He who was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory." (1 Tim. iii. 16.)

c. From a hymn on the Divine Majesty: "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power eternal. Amen." (1 Tim. vi. 15-16.)

d. From a hymn on the Glory of Martyrdom: "If we died with him, we shall also live with Him: if we shall deny him, he also will deny us: if we are faithless, he abideth faithful; for he cannot deny himself." (2 Tim. ii. 11-13.)

e. From a hymn on the Way of Salvation: "When the

kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he poured upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus iii. 4-7.)

f. From a hymn of Gospel Invitation: "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.)

(2) *Doxological* hymns of praise, all from the Book of Revelation. One may stand as an example—"the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb":

"Great and marvellous are thy works,
O Lord God, the Almighty;
Righteous and true are thy ways,
Thou King of the ages.
Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name?
for thou only art holy;
For all the nations shall come and worship before thee;
for thy righteous acts have been made manifest."
(Rev. xv. 3-4.)

Other doxologies appear in Rev. i. 4-8; iv. 8; iv. 11; v. 9-10, 12-13; xi. 15, 17-18.

These passages, of course, are not versified in modern poetic form; but they are written in rhythmic prose of the high poetic quality which makes it impossible to draw an absolute line of demarcation between prose and poetry. Metrical forms were not used until about the fourth century. So late as the ninth century Walafrid Strabo explains that by hymns he does not mean only metrical compositions such as those of Hilary, Ambrose, Prudentius and Bede, but such other acts of praise as are offered in

fitting words and with musical sounds. And Augustine lays down the same rule, that any composition of a rhythmical character, whether in verse or not, which is capable of being sung, must be reckoned a hymn. By such a test, no one will question the title of the passages quoted to be ranked as hymns. There is music in the very sound of them. And no difficulty would be experienced in giving them a musical rendering, for the musical forms in use in New Testament times were probably of the nature of intoned declamation, practically in a monotone, with only such slight changes of pitch as are used in the ecclesiastical chant of the Roman Church ; or, if melody were employed, it would be, not fixed, but free, adapted by the singers to the rhythmical requirements of the words.

3. **Extemporised Utterances** had a place also in the worship of the primitive Church. The services were in no sense stereotyped in form. Their informality gave room for individual initiative. Anyone might take part, intervening as the spirit moved him. One might read, another expound, another preach, another pray, another sing. And sometimes the contribution would be made in the curious way described in 1 Corinthians, known as *Glossolalia*, speaking with tongues. The person affected was subject to a kind of devotional ecstasy. The imagination was excited, and the rapt spirit poured itself out in incoherent and unintelligible ejaculations, or in rhythmic but wordless ebullitions pulsating with emotion. These utterances were strangely moving to those who listened to them. But the congregation had no clue to their meaning, if they had a meaning. There was not a ray of light in them to illumine any mind but that of the person whose spirit was so exalted. This phenomenon was not singular to the New Testament Church ; it has been traced back to ancient times in Greece and Egypt.

It has analogies, it is said, in the long flourishes still common in Oriental music, and also, it is suggested, in the "jubilations" or "melismas" of the Roman chant. Among the Corinthians it led to serious abuses, and was a cause of distraction and dispeace in the Church. St Paul discountenanced it as contrary to all order and valueless for any purpose of edification. How long it lingered is unknown, but as public worship came to be regulated, and especially when it came to be fixed in set liturgical forms, there would be no place for it, and its disturbing influence would cease.

Various modern attempts to revive it, as, for example, among the Irvingites, have caused considerable contemporary excitement, but, as at the first, its valuelessness for any spiritual purpose has invariably led to its speedy disuse. Among others, Jane Eliza Leeson (310, 437, 668) professed, while a member of the Catholic Apostolic (Irvingite) Church, to receive the afflatus of the Spirit, to be moved, however, not to ecstatic or unintelligible extemporisation, but to the utterance of unpremeditated hymns, cast in sound verse-forms. This phase of the phenomenon also proved evanescent.

III

HYMNS FROM THE DAYS OF THE GREAT PERSECUTIONS

AT the beginning of the second century Christianity was a proscribed religion. Judaism was permitted, but when it became evident that the Christians were not a Jewish sect, they came under imperial suspicion. Their numbers were still insignificant, but were growing rapidly, and to curb their increase the government applied stern measures of repression. Persecution was set in motion against them. Throughout three centuries it continued, intermittently, often sporadically, but again and again with determined ferocity throughout the whole Roman empire. In the furnace of affliction the Church was not consumed ; its faith and devotion shone with a brighter glow. And in the end its sufferings issued in a signal triumph. "The seed of blood was scattered : there arose the harvest of the Church."

Towards the end of A.D. 112, only some fifteen years after the death of St John, Pliny the younger, governor of Bithynia and Pontus, wrote in some anxiety to Trajan, his imperial master, asking for instructions as to how he should treat the Christians in his province. They were multiplying fast, he said. "Many of every age, every rank, and also of both sexes, are called into danger and are likely to be so ; and not only through the cities, but even through the villages and rural districts, the contagion of that superstition has spread." The problem had become urgent. He had tried methods of repression, but the results were unsatisfactory and perplexing.

Apparently he had come to doubt the wisdom of that method of treatment, for what he had learned about them suggested no danger to the State. From two deaconesses whom he had examined under torture, and from other sources, he had found that it was the custom of the Christians to hold their meetings for worship on Sunday mornings before dawn, and "to sing, antiphonally, a hymn of praise to Christ as God"; and that they bound themselves by an oath not to do anything criminal, but to avoid theft, violence, adultery, lying, fraud. The single ray of light this letter casts on the worship of the time is of value, since Justin Martyr, our chief authority on the services of that century, writing thirty years later, says nothing about the Christian use of song.

It is uncertain what the hymn Pliny refers to can have been. It may have been a Hebrew psalm of marked Messianic import. But more probably it was one of two hymns which came very early into use. (1) **The Ter-Sanctus** (713) is an amplification of the seraphim's song which Isaiah heard in the temple. It illustrates the objective character of all these early hymns. They are occupied, not with the worshippers' feelings about themselves or what they are doing, but solely with the Object of praise Himself; their one thought is of adoration. (2) **The Gloria in Excelsis** (717) is an expansion of the Angels' Song at Bethlehem. There could be no fitter beginning for a hymnody whose chief burden was to be glad tidings for all peoples. This was the Morning Hymn of the early Church, and as such it passed into the liturgies of the West.

Two other hymns of this almost biblical order deserve mention at this point, although they have not come into our use: the **Trisagion**—"Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, have mercy upon us"; and the **Te decet laus**, based on Psalm lxxv. 1: "To Thee

belongeth praise, to Thee belongeth laud, to Thee belongeth glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen."

The **Ter-Sanctus** and the **Gloria in Excelsis** have peculiarly sacred and tender associations for those who have imagination enough to set them against the background of their early history. They "were sung before Christianity had achieved any visible triumph; when it was still a *religio illicita*, existing by precarious sufferance; when every public act of Christian worship was liable to end in martyrdom, and every song of praise might be finished among the multitude above, who rejoice that they have been counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. Those who joined in it knew not how soon their 'Holy, holy, holy' might be resumed, after a brief agony, among 'angels and archangels and all the company of heaven,' or whether their 'Glory to God in the highest' might not be chanted next among the angelic band who first struck its chords of joy." To remember facts like these cannot fail to invest these hymns with a new power of appeal as we sing them.

A third hymn which belongs to this early period is "Hail, gladdening Light" (281). Its age is uncertain, but it established itself very early as the Church's Evening Hymn, and the fact that St Basil, writing in the fourth century, refers to it as authoritative on a point of doctrine, suggests that it has a title to a place with the very first hymns of the primitive Church. It was used in his day at the lighting of the lamps at evening service, and therefore came to be called the Candlelight Hymn; it was known as **Epiluchnion** by the Greeks, and as **Lucernarium** by the Latins. "We cannot say," says St Basil, "who was the father of the expressions in the Thanksgiving at the Lighting of the Lamps; but it is

an ancient formula which the people repeat, and no one has yet been accused of impiety for saying, 'We hymn the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit of God.' " To this day the hymn is used as the Vesper Hymn of the Greek (Orthodox) Church. Longfellow makes fine use of it in his *Golden Legend*, and Sir Arthur Sullivan's setting of it in that version is worthy of its grandeur; but it is Keble's noble version that has given it a place among modern hymns.

The Shaping of the Creeds.—The centuries of persecution were also centuries of bitter theological conflict. If suffering was needed to refine the spirit of the Church, controversy was no less required for the ripening of its mind upon the great doctrines of the faith. On the anvil of debate the great creeds were hammered out. **The Nicene Creed** (725) received final sanction at the famous Council of Nicæa in 325, and though **The Apostles' Creed** did not reach its final state (724) till the middle of the eighth century, its beginnings can be traced back to the fourth century also. Even in their inchoate stages they were sung, as often as not defiantly, in hymns that were like banners flung out challengingly on the breeze. And one of the greatest took shape finally in a hymn which is a treasure and a glory of the Universal Church. The **Te Deum**, in its first form, belongs to this period. In the form familiar now, it dates from the fifth century, about A.D. 400-450. By the end of that century it had gained a position almost equal in veneration and use to that of the ancient psalms. An attractive tradition would have us believe that it originated miraculously at the baptism of St Augustine by the mighty St Ambrose. According to one form of the legend, the whole hymn gushed forth from the lips of Ambrose in a splendid burst of inspiration, as he caught some wonderful forevision of the future of the great

recruit he was enrolling in the army of the Cross. In another form the story has it that when he broke forth in thanksgiving, "We praise Thee, O God : we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord," Augustine responded in the same exalted strain, "All the earth doth worship Thee, the Father everlasting." And so onward, in alternate strophe and antistrophe, the inspired men sang the whole of that sublime hymn which ever since, throughout 1500 years, has been the supreme song of the Church's faith and thanksgiving. Reluctantly, the historian is obliged to dismiss this story into the region of myth. It may be that Ambrose began its use in the liturgy of the Church, and that this fact accounts for his name being so intimately associated with it. But by his day part of it at least was already old.

Not improbably it was built up out of materials supplied by other prayers and hymns. In any case, it is a composite structure. The nucleus of it is believed to have been a Greek hymn of the second century in praise of Christ as God—"We praise Thee as God : we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord," and so on for the first ten verses. Later, when the great controversies about the Trinity arose, it was modified into its present shape, the Trinitarian doxology in verses 11-13 being added. Verses 14-21 are a purely Latin composition of the fifth century. But however it may have been composed, it is unsurpassed as a confession of the Church's faith and a testimony of its thanksgiving. Its comprehensiveness, the grandeur of its conceptions, the incomparable dignity of its language, the moving transition from adoration to confession and supplication, and the final mounting of its confidence to the quiet but firm assertion of the faith that a soul settled on the rock of these triumphant certainties will never be confounded—*In te, Domine, speravi : non confundar in aeternum*—combine to give it an unchallenged place as the

greatest of all the hymns of "the Holy Church throughout all the world."

It appears that in the second century hymns multiplied. Eusebius quotes an author from near the end of that century who speaks of "the many psalms and hymns, written by the faithful brethren from the beginning (which) celebrate Christ the Word of God, speaking of Him as divine." One notable survivor of these (569) is by **Clement of Alexandria** (170-220), who is the first hymn-writer known to us by name. Great indeed and venerable his name is. A Greek by birth, probably a native of Athens, he early devoted his life to the search for truth. From land to land he travelled in search of it—through Italy, Greece, and the East—and sat at the feet of teachers from Ionia, Coelesyria, Assyria (probably Tatian), and Palestine; but nowhere did he find what he sought until in Alexandria, from a teacher named Pantaenus, who afterwards went as a missionary to India, he came to the Truth in Christ. Thenceforward his life was devoted to the work of commending his Master. He settled in Alexandria, succeeded Pantaenus as head of the catechetical school, and had the great Origen as one of his pupils. Alexandria was at that time the centre of the world's learning as well as the entrepôt of its commerce, and it was of high value to the new religion to have at its service there an intellect of the first order, in command not only of vast stores of learning, but of an incomparable eloquence to commend its message. Clement wrote much; ten of his works are known by name, dealing with a wide variety of subjects. One of them, *The Pedagogue*, or *Tutor*, deals with the subject of Christian education, in three books. The first book describes the Tutor, who is Christ the Word Himself; the pupils, who are Christian men and women, whom He trains by love and chastisement; and the method of

instruction. The second goes into great detail in giving instruction on matters of daily life, such as eating and drinking, clothes, furniture, sleep, behaviour at table, the games a Christian may play, the ornaments a Christian may wear. Incidentally, it gives a vivid and amusing picture of manners at that period, and shows the difficulties confronting a Christian at every step as he mingles with the pagan society around him.

Appended to the book are two poems, the first of which, "A Hymn of the Saviour," is paraphrased in Hymn 569. The original is very rugged, a string of epithets, a catalogue of figures, representing the treasures Clement has found in Christ. Yet it is full of feeling. "Clement surrenders," Dr T. R. Glover says in his *Conflict of Religions*, "to a tide of emotion, and is borne along singing, and, as he sings, he seems to gather up all the music of the ancient world: we catch notes that come from Greek and Hebrew song, and the whole is woven together into a hymn to 'the Saviour,' 'my singer,' 'our new Orpheus,' that for sheer beauty, for gladness and purity of feeling is unmatched in early Christian literature." And this witness to the faith of the man who has found so much in Christ that He has become his universe, acquires an eloquence which is not in the bare words from the circumstances in which the hymn was written. Persecution was abroad. "Daily," Clement wrote, "martyrs are burned, beheaded, and crucified before our eyes." Before long, for his life, he himself had to flee. In the same persecution, under Septimus Severus (202-3) Origen's father suffered martyrdom. Whither Clement went, and where he died, history does not relate. Out of his rough and unpoetic lines Dr MacGill has woven one of our best children's hymns.

IV

A NEW HYMNODY IS BORN OF CONTROVERSY IN THE EAST

The Syrian Church has the honour of having been the source of hymnody in the East. Theodoret says that antiphonal singing began at Antioch and spread therefrom in all directions in the fourth century. But by that time the use of hymns was already well established. It arose, by a curious irony, as, later, it did in the Greek Church also, as part of the propaganda of a heretical sect. Early in the third century the Gnostic heresy was spreading like a prairie fire throughout the Church. One of the most ardent and effective of its apostles was one **Bar-Daisan**, or **Bardesan**, a native of Edessa in Upper Mesopotamia, where he was born in 154. He was a poet, and, setting himself to the use of his art in the service of his faith, he wrote a number of Gnostic hymns which "clothed the pest of depravation in the garment of musical beauty." These captivated the populace. The tunes were attractive. Older people sang them at their work, and children at their play. Thus early the discovery was made that hymns are the best means of implanting doctrine in the minds of young and old alike. Bar-Daisan's son, Harmonius, followed his father in the composition of additional hymns in new and attractive metres. On the wings of song the false doctrine flew fast and far, and for nearly a century no poet appeared who was able to furnish orthodoxy with the same means of propagation.

At last, however, the match of the heretic appeared in **Ephraem the Syrian** (307-373), a native of Nisibis in

Northern Mesopotamia, who settled as a monk in Edessa, the arch-Gnostic's native town. He was a man of great learning, and a prolific writer of sermons, commentaries, and metrical homilies; but it was his poetic gift that gave him his power. Adopting Bar-Daisan's weapons—his metres, rhythms, and tunes—he wrote hymns setting forth the orthodox doctrine with such winsome simplicity, such freshness of feeling and evangelic fervour, that these in turn caught the popular ear. He trained choirs of young women, novices destined for the cloister, to sing them. Their influence was immediate. They bewitched the people, and did much to drive the Gnostic error from the field. It was in this way that metrical hymns became rooted in the Syrian Church. A large body of them exists, but few have come into Western use.

The Greek Church also adopted hymns, to begin with, as weapons of controversy. Arius (*d.* 336), denied the deity of Jesus, and a number of sacred songs were composed to popularise his teaching. They were written, it is said, in metres that were associated with the most disgracefully licentious songs. Some strange consequences ensued. When the illustrious John Chrysostom (347-407) arrived in Constantinople in 397 as its bishop, he found that the Emperor Theodosius had forbidden the Arian heretics to have a place of worship within the city. They retorted by assembling on Sundays and holy days outside of the city gates, and at sunset marching into the city and parading for hours through the streets, singing Arian hymns and anthems with choruses. The impression thus made on the populace was so marked that Chrysostom realised the need for some kind of counter-action. Accordingly, he organised rival processions of hymn-singers. These outdid the heretics in the pomp and circumstance with which they marched through the streets, carrying crosses and, in the darkness, torches,

and singing their orthodox hymns. Some of these hymns were written by the bishop himself. Inevitably, the processions came into violent collision. Rioting ensued, with so much tumult and bloodshed that an imperial edict was issued forbidding Arian hymn-singing in public altogether. But the use of hymns in the nocturnal services of the Church, thus established, went on.

Gregory Nazianzen (329-389), a predecessor of Chrysostom in the see of Constantinople, had before this, in his retirement, produced hymns of a high order. His father, bishop of Nazianzus in Cappadocia, had been won over from a semi-pagan sect to the Christian faith by the spirit of Nonna, his saintly wife. Gregory studied at Cæsarea, the capital of the province, at Cæsarea in Palestine, at Alexandria and at Athens, where Julian, afterwards emperor and apostate, and St Basil were among his fellow-students. His own strong inclination was towards the life of an ascetic; his nature was too fine and sensitive for the *sturm und drang* of public life in those tempestuous times. His father, however, induced him to take holy orders. In 370 he was consecrated bishop of Sasima, and for a time he acted as his father's coadjutor. Nine years later, he was called to Constantinople, then a hotbed of Arianism, to minister to the oppressed remnant of orthodox Christians there. All the churches were in Arian hands. His people were few, and suffered persecution. Bitter opposition faced him on every hand. A turn in the tide seemed to have come when Theodosius mounted the throne; Gregory was enthroned as patriarch by the emperor himself. But the validity of his episcopal commission was called in question, and his health broke under the strain. He withdrew to the family estate at Arizanzus, near Nazianzus, and in the quiet of his eight years of retirement there, occupied himself in writing the sacred

poetry of which "O Light that knew no dawn" (458) is a fine example.

Synesius of Cyrene (c. 375-430) was another notable writer of this period. He was of illustrious descent: he could trace his pedigree through seventeen centuries, a feat not to be equalled, Gibbon says, in the history of mankind. He had distinguished gifts, was an orator, a statesman and a patriot, a philosopher and a poet. He did his best to arouse the Emperor Arcadius to the danger he saw threatening the empire from the Goths, but, as Gibbon says, "the court of Arcadius indulged the zeal, applauded the eloquence, *and* neglected the advice of Synesius," with what result the world knows. Sorely against his will, Synesius became bishop of Ptolemais. "His detractors hinted, not without a show of reason, that he was far more of an adept in soldiering and dog-breaking than in the mysteries of the unseen world." So says Kingsley in his interesting sketch of him as "the squire-bishop" in *Hypatia*. In addition, Synesius knew himself to be far from orthodox. He has been represented as only a semi-Christian and as a disbeliever in the resurrection. Undoubtedly he was a man of a primarily philosophic cast of mind; his work is deeply tinged with Neo-Platonic thought. Yet the one hymn (403) which we have of the ten he wrote, while doubtless it owes much to Mr Chatfield's exquisite translation, is so charged with true Christian feeling as to encourage the belief that at least in the fundamentals of the spirit he was sound.

Later Greek Hymnody.—Two hymns, attributed by the translator, Dr Neale, to St Anatolius, are known now not to be his. One, "The day is past and over" (287), is of the sixth or the seventh century. It is taken from the Great After-Supper Service of the Greek Church, and is a great favourite in the Greek Isles. Dr Neale says

"it is to the scattered hamlets of Chios and Mitylene what Bishop Ken's Evening Hymn is to the villages of our own land." The other, "Fierce was the wild billow" (84), is supposed to be of the eighth century. The author is unknown.

This brings us to the most brilliant period of Greek Christian hymnody, in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries. The tide of Mohammedan conquest had by this time submerged the Holy Land; Jerusalem fell in 636. From the conditions thus created the wave of monasticism, already flowing fast, gathered fresh impetus and volume. One of the most eminent of those who were caught and carried away by it was **St John of Damascus** (eighth century), the last but one of the Fathers of the Greek Church. Though a Christian, he held civil office in his native town, Damascus, under the Mohammedan Caliph. But the religious impulse led him to abandon everything, to forsake that lovely city—"a handful of pearls in a goblet of emeralds"—and seclude himself for life in the monastery of Mar Saba (St Sabas), in one of the most stricken wildernesses in the world. Where the Kidron breaks through the "horrible abysses" of the scarred and furrowed Judean hills on its way to the Dead Sea, high on the face of a precipice that drops sheer 400 feet down to the river bed, the monastery has been built. It has been likened to an eagle's nest clinging perilously and apparently inaccessibly to the tawny rock. The whole scene is one of unutterable desolation. There John lived to extreme old age.

The works he poured out made him the most redoubtable theologian of his age; by some he is regarded as the authentic originator of the scholasticism which long afterwards gained such power in the West. The Eastern Church was at that time in the throes of the Iconoclastic controversy. Leo the Isaurian, the first of the Byzantine

emperors, embarked with reforming zeal on an endeavour to abolish the use of icons, the coloured pictures which still form a characteristic feature of the Eastern Church's worship. Leo's most powerful antagonist was John Damascene. Writing from his monastery, where, under Moslem protection, he was secure from the imperial anger, he aroused an army of monks to fanatical opposition. The imperial will won its triumph for the time, only after savage tumults had been stirred up and crushed no less savagely ; and meanwhile the throne was shaken, and the Church miserably divided. The defeated monks bided their time, and in a later reign brought back the iconolatry, which has continued ever since.

But John was more than a militant theologian ; he was the most poetical of all the Greek Christian poets. In the fashion of the time, he was a writer of odes and canons. The ode consisted of from three to five short sentences or stanzas, called troparia, the feeling of each of which culminates in the closing line. Eight odes, or in some instances nine, threaded on an acrostic written at the opening of the first ode, constituted a canon. The first notable writer in this form was St Andrew of Jerusalem (660-732), Archbishop of Crete, but John Damascene was the master. He wrote the Golden Canon, or Queen of Canons, which is still regularly sung in the Eastern Church at the Easter festival. Its opening ode is " The day of resurrection " (123).

Stephen the Sabaite (eighth century) was a nephew of John, and when but ten years of age accompanied his uncle into voluntary exile. He lived in the solitude of Mar Saba for over sixty years. The hymn attributed to him, " Art thou weary ? " (391), is not a translation of anything he wrote, but was suggested by something in one of his hymns. It might have come from his pen, so touchingly does it express the soul-weariness with which

the monastery must often have overwhelmed its inhabitants, and the faith in which they found consolation. Like John's "Those eternal bowers," this hymn gains much in poignancy when the circumstances that would have made it natural on Stephen's lips are kept in mind.

Of another hymn-writer of this period, **Joseph the Hymnographer** (c. 810-883), some 200 canons survive; he is said to have written 1000. Born in Sicily, he left home in 830 for Thessalonica, to devote himself to a monastic life. He was destined, however, to a career of adventure and often stormy publicity. He was captured by pirates, and kept as a slave in Crete. Later, he gained note as a powerful preacher in Constantinople, and head of a great monastery there. The part he took in the Iconoclastic controversy, however, drew down on him the displeasure of the emperor, and he was banished to the Chersonese. The empress Theodora recalled him and made him keeper of the sacred vessels of the Great Church of the capital. He stood high in the favour of the patriarch Ignatius and his successor, but when the latter fell into disfavour, he accompanied him into banishment. He was the most copious of hymn-writers. "O happy band of pilgrims" (577) is less a translation of one of his hymns than an elaboration by Dr Neale of a suggestion received from one of them. After his time Greek hymnody declined.

V

AMBROSE OF MILAN AND THE PIONEERS OF THE WEST

Hilary of Poitiers (c. 310-368) is credited with having been the introducer of hymns into the Church of the West. He was brought up a heathen, but on becoming a Christian exhibited such piety and nobility of spirit that he was elected to the bishopric of Poitiers, his native town. Augustine called him "the Illustrious Doctor of all the Churches," and he was known as "Malleus Arianorum," the hammer of the Arians. During an exile in Phrygia he was so charmed by the hymn-singing he heard in the churches of Asia Minor that he tried his hand at hymn-writing himself. The three of his hymns that are extant are metrical in form, but show no artistic faculty. There is no evidence that they pleased popular taste, and the probability is that they were used only privately.

Ambrose, the great bishop of Milan (340-397), was the real populariser of hymnody in the West, and the true and only begetter of the popular hymn. His father was Christian prefect of the Gauls. He himself became an advocate, distinguished himself as a pleader, and in 374 was appointed to the high office of consular of Liguria, with his residence at Milan, then regarded as the civil metropolis of Italy. A few months after his installation a bishop of the diocese had to be elected. The preceding bishop had been an Arian, and those who held by that heresy regarded the election as critical, deeming that if they failed to carry one of their party, their cause in

Italy would suffer a grievous blow. Feeling ran high, and became so virulent that the bishops besought the emperor to make the choice. He also shirked the responsibility. The church in which the election was to take place was crowded with excited people; disorder threatened, and Ambrose, as civil magistrate, had to intervene to keep the peace. He displayed such power in controlling the passions of the assemblage that when a cry was raised, "Ambrose is bishop," it was taken up by the crowd with importunate enthusiasm. Ambrose was only a catechumen and had not even been baptised, but the office was forced on him, and within a week of his receiving his first communion he was consecrated as bishop and metropolitan. In a position of extraordinary difficulty he proved the most powerful bishop of his generation. He was statesman and scholar, a formidable theologian, the most brilliant defender of the faith against Arianism, and a great and saintly man. Augustine was one of his converts.

The controversy with the Arians entered upon an acute phase when the empress Justina, mother of the child-emperor Valentinian II., and a fanatical Arian partisan, demanded the use of the Portian basilica (church) outside of the walls, for the worship of the adherents of the sect to which she belonged. To have consented, Ambrose replied, would have been to surrender a church which was not the bishop's, but Christ's, to those who denied His deity. Ambrose was not the man to be concussed into such treachery. When he refused, the Empress's retort was to besiege him in the church with his adherents, hoping to starve them into submission. But the people rallied in crowds to the support of their bishop. For a time they garrisoned all the churches of the city. Ambrose formed the defenders into bands of worshippers, and arranged for them a course of religious offices in which hymn-singing and antiphonal recitation of the psalms

formed an important part. Augustine, who was present with his mother, has left on record the profound impression the singing made on him. "How I wept at Thy hymns and canticles, touched to the quick by the voices of Thy melodious Church! These voices flowed into my ears, and the truth distilled into my heart, and thence there streamed forth a devout emotion, and my tears ran down, and I was happy therein."

Those stormy times passed; Justina and the heresy she represented were defeated; but the use of hymns, thus "cradled on the battlefield," went on and spread throughout the Church. Ambrose himself composed a number of them. For four Augustine vouches—*Aeterne rerum Conditor*; *Deus, Creator omnium*; *Jam surgit hora tertia*; *Intende qui regis Israel*. Others are almost certainly his, among them *O Lux beata Trinitas* (4), which is just such a bold hymn of the Holy Trinity as might be expected to be produced in the heat of the conflict by the chief protagonist of that threatened doctrine, in face of its powerful assailants. Another hymn in the Ambrosian style, *Iam lucis orto sidere* (258), is of much later date. Ambrose's hymns were in the best sense popular, in contents and form. They were sung with immense enthusiasm in their day, and kept their place in public use until Latin ceased to be a living language; and far beyond that period their influence endured.

The Ambrosian Music, however, was what most captured the people's favour. Before his time the heretics had a monopoly of pleasing tunes. He was the first to act upon the principle that it is not good policy to leave to the anti-Christian forces what the people most love to sing. He introduced a simple, sweet, melodious, yet devout type of congregational song, which at once made his hymns popular. Augustine felt the emotional effect of it so much that he doubted its

propriety. Admitting that it charmed and moved him, he said that it tempted him to be so enraptured by the pleasing sound as to pay little attention to the sense of what was being sung, and for that reason he was disposed to banish all such singing from the churches. More to his mind was the simple "plain tune after the manner of distinct reading" recorded by Athanasius as in use at Alexandria. The Alexandrian ban upon vocal inflexions, however, produced a psalmody so dull that the African Donatists poked fun at it; their own music was much more interesting. Unfortunately, the practice Ambrose introduced degenerated. Light theatrical tunes were brought into use which drew discredit upon it, and in the sixth century congregational singing was altogether suppressed, and a return made to a severe ancient style which made the church-song a monopoly of the clergy. The right of the people to a direct share in the Church's praise was not regained till the Reformation.

Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348-413), a Spaniard of Saragossa, takes a high place in the ranks of hymn-writers. For the greater part of his life he was a civilian. He rose to distinction, but at 57, sickened by the follies and vices of the age, he withdrew from the world and devoted himself to the religious life. He produced two poetical books—one, *Liber Cathemerinon*, a collection of hymns for the different hours of daily prayer and the festiyals of the year; the other, *Liber Peristephanon*, a series of narratives of the sufferings and triumphs of various, chiefly Spanish, martyrs. If he was late in becoming a Christian, he nobly atoned for his tardiness, as his great hymn, *Corde natus ex Parentis* (60), shows. He was a poet of true genius. "In the hot-blooded Spaniard there is a sparkle and glow, a thrill and enthusiasm, unknown to the ancient Roman poets." He has been called the Horace and Vergil of the Christians,

and also the Latin Watts. The classical metres hampered him, however; under their trammels his eager spirit could not find free expression. Not until these trammels were broken, quantity ignored, accent substituted, and the latent powers of rhyme called into play, did Latin Christian poetry come to its full kingdom.

St Patrick, second bishop and patron saint of Ireland, belongs to the same period. Born probably at Dumbarton on the Clyde, though this is disputed, he was a Roman by descent. When sixteen years of age, he was captured by a band of Irish raiders and carried off to Ireland—"to the end of the earth," as he expressed it—and there sold into slavery. For six years he was in captivity, herding cattle, or, as some say, pigs. In after days he made constant regretful references to his incurable *rusticitas*, and he did undoubtedly write in the style of an ill-educated man. Who can wonder, remembering how he spent the best years of his youth? But if in those miserable years he did not learn much in the way of letters, he learned other things that determined his destiny. He acquired the Irish language. And his misfortunes led him to Christ.

The commercial relations of Ireland with Gaul had before this time introduced Christianity into the island. As yet it was weak, sporadic, and unorganised. But somehow it found Patrick, and his espousal of it was complete. As the result, he believed, of earnest prayer, he escaped from his servitude. The ship in which he found refuge carried him to Gaul (France), and there he spent some years in the monastery of Lérins. But the burden of Ireland's need, and the thought especially of its children, gave him no peace of mind until he resolved to dedicate his life to the evangelisation of its people. In due time he realised his dream. He returned as bishop, in succession to St Palladius, the first in Ireland to hold episcopal rank. The story of what he accom-

plished there is embellished with an immense amount of legendary adornment, but, stripped of all such accretions, it reveals a personality of great strength, initiative, energy, and courage. He was sensitive and affectionate, and with an intense spirituality combined the practical gifts of the pioneer. Beyond all question, he transformed Ireland. He organised the sporadic Christianity that had been there before him, and secured its permanence. He gathered into the Church the kingdoms that had been pagan before his coming, and made it a power throughout the whole land ; and further, he brought the Irish Church into relation with the rest of Christendom, and gave it " a place in the sun."

As a hymn-writer he was not the first in Ireland ; St Sechnall had been before him, with a hymn, however, which is destitute of literary merit. Patrick's own contribution (505, 506)—for his authorship, though not absolutely certain, has great probabilities in its favour—has the uncouthness of grammatical construction and the innocence of knowledge of either Irish or classical verse-forms, which are consistent with his lack of education ; but it has also the fire of his great heart in it, and it gives such moving expression to his own faith and consecration that it is likely for long to remain a hymn in which youth especially will find a voice for its devotion. *St Patrick's Breastplate*, or *Lorica*, it is called, because legend has it that this was the armour he invoked as a protection against the king at Tara ; it is said to have rendered Patrick and his companions invisible ! It is a charm-hymn, of a type once common in Europe as an incantation against evil. Such charms and runes are still found in Ireland and the Western Highlands of Scotland. They were used by bards and monks in Ireland down to the fifteenth century. Patrick's *Lorica* is an instance of the Christianising of the pagan charm.

VI

GREGORY THE GREAT AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

THE man who banned the Ambrosian music and inaugurated the reign of plain-chant was **Gregory I.** (540-604), justly styled the Great, one of the towering figures and one of the noblest, in the history of the Church. He came of an ancient Roman family which had a long and fine tradition of public service. In early manhood he became first a senator, and then prefect, of Rome. Those were dark days for the proud imperial city. The Roman empire was in dissolution, its capital in decay. Long wars had wasted the land, and famine and pestilence following them had made the city like a desert. "Everywhere," he wrote, "do we see mourning, everywhere do we hear sighs. The cities are destroyed, the castles are ruined, the fields are laid waste, the whole land is desolate." Gregory did what he could as a civil administrator, but he came to the conclusion that much more was needed to extricate order from the universal confusion, and that the one hope was in the Church. When his father died in 575 his mother entered a nunnery, and he became one of the richest men in Rome. Immediately he dedicated his wealth to the founding of monastic houses on his estates in Italy and Sicily, and one of these, into which he converted the great palace of his family on the Caelian Hill in Rome, became the asylum into which he himself withdrew, taking the vows of a monk upon him.

But so powerful a man could not be left in seclusion.

Summoned to act as one of the seven Regionary Deacons of Rome, he displayed such capacity and energy that he was sent to Constantinople as Papal Nuncio. On his return, he became the power behind the throne of the reigning Pope, and on the latter's death was raised, against his will, to the Papal Chair itself. It was "a ship rotten in every plank and leaking at every seam that he came to captain"; so he wrote to a friend in Constantinople: But he restored the fortunes of the Papacy. His reign was marked by such Christian zeal and devotion, and such wisdom and moderation, that if his successors had followed his example there might have been no need for a reformation.

The missionaries he sent out found their way into many lands. The story of how he was fired by the desire to evangelise England is so beautiful as to deserve to be true—how in the slave market of Rome he was struck by the beauty of some fair English youths exposed there for sale, and on asking who they were and being told, he exclaimed, "If they were but Christians they would be—*non Angli sed angeli*—not Angles, but angels"; on being told that they were from Deira, he replied that they must be saved *de ira Dei*, from the wrath of God; and on learning that the name of their king was Aella, he rejoined that Alleluia must some day be sung in their land. He volunteered to be the first missionary to England himself, and had gone three days on the journey thither, when the Pope recalled him. Augustine (not, of course, the most famous bearer of that name, who lived two centuries earlier) was sent instead. He was able to accomplish little of what a leader of men like Gregory would have achieved. "Augustine," witnesses Bishop Lightfoot, "was the apostle of Kent, but Aidan was the apostle of England." The most powerful evangelising influence in England came from the north, not from the south—from

Iona, not from Rome. But Gregory's part in the Christianising of England ought never to be forgotten.

Musical Reform.—Gregory's services to the liturgy and the music of the Church won him the title of *Magister Cæremoniarum*. He was the first and greatest of liturgical reformers; he gave a definite form to the service of the mass. When, however, it is claimed for him that he was the inventor of the Gregorian chant, the claim cannot be sustained. That type of music drew from older sources, chiefly, it is believed, from the free recitative used in the Hebrew temple. In its subordination of the music to the rhythm of the words, it is "the projection of the musical principle of antiquity over into modern times." The association of Gregory's name with it is probably due to two things. (1) Pope Leo I., in the middle of the fifth century, established at Monte Cassino a monastery whose monks were required to devote themselves to the service of the canonical hours. In 580 their monastery was burned by the Lombards, and they transferred their residence and activities to Rome. There they established a college of singers from which the papal choir was recruited, and collected, classified, and systematised a large body of liturgic chants. These, doubtless, formed the *Antiphonary* which bears Gregory's name as having been made under his reign. (2) He was responsible for making this type of liturgical chant as obligatory as the liturgy itself throughout the Church of the West. Uniformity of musical practice henceforth prevailed.

The new type of music was exclusively vocal; instrumental aids were rejected. It was severe, solemn, entirely distinct in style and tone from secular music, and it remains to this day exclusively associated with divine worship. It had no measure of time, no bars, no fixed rhythm, no sharps or flats, no harmonies. Anything more different from the melodious and flowing Ambrosian

music it would be difficult to conceive. And it was not congregational. Quite definitely it withdrew the musical part of the service from the congregation, and reserved it for clergy and choir alone. Examples of it will be found in the first settings of Hymns 714-718 in the revised *Hymnary*. The other *Hymnary* tunes described as plain-song do not exhibit the true plain-chant, but a modification of it made to suit words which have a definite verse-rhythm. And the French ecclesiastical melodies, mostly of the seventeenth century, which are described as derived from Angers, Bayeux, Grenoble, and Rouen (4, 78, 142, 280, 356) represent a process of transition from unmeasured plain-song to the measured type of music which is most familiar to us to-day.

St Columba (521-597), a contemporary and correspondent of Gregory, has left us some precious relics of verse. A typical Irishman, born at Gartán in Donegal, of royal stock alike on the spear and on the spindle side, he exhibited all the impulsiveness, the fiery ardour, the eagerness in pursuit of a grievance, the racial animosity, the fighting spirit, and the spiritual fervour, of his race. Until he was forty, he was a pioneer missionary in his own country. Monasticism was the basis on which Patrick had built up the Irish Church, and those who followed him had bestrewn the land with monasteries, several of which, in Columba's time, numbered over 1000 monks. Columba added many more, among the 300 religious institutions he founded.

He was an eager penman, and is said to have transcribed hundreds of copies of the Scriptures. This passion led to his virtual banishment from Ireland. Determined to obtain a copy of a precious manuscript of the Psalter in the monastery of his teacher, St Finbar, at Moville, he found means to make one surreptitiously. Finbar discovered this, and claimed the copy. Columba

disputed the claim, and the case was appealed to King Diarmid. The decision was given in what has been described as the earliest copyright law in history, "As the calf goes with the cow, the copy goes with the book." Columba's ire was such that he did not rest until he had raised a revolt against Diarmid and defeated him. With the bloodshed the battle involved upon his conscience, he could not remain in Ireland, and he departed in grief of heart beyond sight of the shores of his beloved native land to Iona. The monastery he founded there set up a light that shone far through Scotland and England.

The evangelisation of the Picts, begun a century before by St Ninian, had already made great progress. A generation before Columba arrived, "St Drostan and his three"—St Colm, St Medan, and St Fergus—were carrying on the apostolic labours the traces of which are found all over the north-east of Scotland; and St Donnan of Eigg and St Moluag, "the pure and brilliant, the gracious and decorous, the sun of Lismore in Alba," St Kentigern also, were at work simultaneously with Columba. But to give them their due of honour as builders of the Pictish Church, while it narrows the area long supposed to have been covered by Columba's labours, need not dim the lustre of his actual achievement. He made the Church of Iona one of the foremost branches of the Church Catholic, a missionary centre of far-reaching influence, and he stands forth himself as one of the most vivid, human, and commanding personalities in Scottish history.

His Hymns.—The chief hymn Columba wrote was composed in Iona, to ease his conscience, tradition says, of the burden resting upon it because of the bloodshed he had repeatedly caused in the stormier times of his career. From its opening words it is called the *Altus Prosator*. It is of the Abecedarian order, alphabetical, like the 119th Psalm, and it celebrates the work of God in creation

and providence, with no little passion and much sublimity. It is "a striking monument of the grandeur and passion of his soul." The ancient preface to it describes the coming of messengers from Pope Gregory to Columba, bearing with them gifts, of which one was a complete set of hymns for the evenings of the week. Included in the set, very likely, were the eight hymns which Benedictine editors ascribe to Gregory's own authorship, and among them, not improbably, the fine *Nocte surgentes* (263), an early morning hymn. In acknowledging the gift, Columba sent Gregory a copy of his own hymn, and the Pope, in reply, offered the criticism that the poem failed to give due celebration to the work of God in redemption. Columba felt the criticism to be just, and, to meet it, wrote the hymn *In Te, Christe, credentium miserearis omnium*, from the two parts of which—one on what Christ is to believers, the other on what He has done for mankind—the two Columba hymns (179, 454) in the *Hymnary* are taken. The Scoto-Roman cycle of hymns sent by Gregory to Iona is believed to have displaced the primitive monastic cycle at Canterbury itself, and gradually throughout the whole of the West, becoming the standard collection in Western use.

Venantius Honorius Clementianus Fortunatus (c. 530-609), another contemporary of Gregory, was "almost the last link between the classical and the mediæval world." He won early fame as a poet at the schools of Ravenna. A threatened blindness was averted, as he believed, miraculously, through anointing his eyes with the oil of a lamp that burned in Ravenna before the altar of St Martin of Tours. Gratitude moved him to pay his *devoirs* at the shrine of the saint in Tours itself. He crossed the Alps with this in view, and remained in Gaul for the rest of his life; to this he owes his fame as "the sole poet of the Merovingian period." His strange story

sheds much light on social conditions in France in an age when civilisation was under eclipse and virtually barbaric conditions prevailed. Like the Goliards of a later period, the wandering students who roamed Europe in the early days of the universities, he roamed the country, finding hospitality in the religious houses and the castles of the nobles throughout Gaul. He was a lover of good living, an amusing table companion, and his abundant social gifts and skill in rewarding his hosts with "paid panegyrics" in flattering complimentary verses, won him a welcome wherever he went. "He is a true child of the decadence, full of a depraved literary ideal to which sonorous, conventional phrase took the place of sincerity of thought and feeling. He was also a needy adventurer in a time of great convulsions, violence and perfidy, when even the powerful and the high-born found it difficult to guard their heads. His only armour was his keen wit and supple dexterity, with probably a certain personal charm."

For a time he was in close and confidential relations with Radegund, the Queen of the Frankish King Chlotar I., who left her husband to found the monastery of Ste Croix at Poitiers. Fortunatus acted as advisor of the convent. He took orders under Radegund's influence, and rose to be bishop of Poitiers. Most of his verses are of the occasional order. Of the few hymns that remain, the two which appear in the *Hymnary* (108, 115) were both composed on the arrival in Poitiers of a relic of the Cross sent to Radegund by the Byzantine empress Sophia. "Pearls of Christian literature," they reveal a finer strain in Fortunatus' character, and show that by the time he reached his bishopric there was that in his spirit which made him not unworthy of it.

VII

THE MONASTERIES AND SOME IMMORTAL HYMNS WE OWE TO THEM

WE enter now that strange inchoate period which we call the Middle Ages. To the credulous, legend represents it as a veritable golden age. But the glamorous haze which romanticism has to cast over it in order to maintain that legend will not endure the light of incontestable historic truth. It was a time of inexpressible confusion and misery. With the fall of the Roman Empire, order in Europe was very largely dissolved. Over the dim unhappy populations the tides of rapine and warfare passed in almost ceaseless ebb and flow. It is true that amid the confusion great forces were at work, laying the foundations of the new Europe which we know ; but for long periods civilisation hardly existed. It was a wild, cruel, lawless world.

These conditions contributed powerfully to the force and volume of **the Monastic Movement** which had been gathering strength ever since Athanasius, in the fourth century, introduced it from Egypt into the West. What were believing men to do in such a brutal age ? What protest could they make in the name of their Faith that would have the faintest chance of producing any impression ? They concluded that the only effective witness they could offer was to turn their backs on a system of things given over to the dominion of evil, to withdraw into separated communities and there, by renunciation and life after the Christian rule, exhibit the only spirit

that could redeem the world. In the appalling circumstances undoubtedly they were right. And the results justified their policy. The monasteries that sprang up all over Europe established nuclei of law and order amid the surrounding anarchy. They were a standing protest against inhumanity. Their open doors offered hospitality to the stranger and a secure refuge to the hunted and oppressed. In days when the strong sought their living by plunder, and the labourer was driven from the fields, the monks by their own labour redeemed the wilderness in their own neighbourhood, and taught that in such toil there was dignity and not degradation. Moreover, amid disorders and destructions which spared nothing that was exposed to them, the monasteries were the homes of learning and the arts. Within their seclusion scholarship was able to preserve its treasures and had peace to pursue its tasks. We owe to them the survival of the higher culture, the salving of what remains to us of classical literature, and the development of that love for the beautiful which flowered in the glories of Gothic architecture and other forms of medieval art. And, above all, they lifted up the best testimony then possible to the truth and power of the Christian Gospel. The saintly men who lived in them kept the lights of simplicity, purity, and religion burning in the deep darkness of a grossly immoral world. Hymnody illustrates in many ways the soul of goodness that was in this great movement before degeneracy destroyed it.

A Christian Pessimist.—Of the high-minded men who looked out from their seclusion upon the chaos and abounding iniquity of the world, there were many who could conceive no possibility of remedy save through the return of Christ as the Judge of men. Augustine and Lactantius had foretold that the millennial reign of Christ would succeed the Roman Empire. That belief grew and

spread. There was a time when it so possessed men's minds that the fields were left untilled, all occupations were forsaken, and the churches were crowded with praying people, in the belief that the end of the age was at hand. Representative of this type of outlook was **Bernard of Cluny** (twelfth century). He could discern no gleam of hope on any horizon except in the final arraignment of the entire existing order. Watching the world surging in anguish, the conflict swaying uncertainly between Babylon and Zion, the truculent world and the suffering Church, is it to be wondered at that, in despair of betterment, he should cast his longing eyes forward to the coming of the Lord of Righteousness under whose reign evil is to be judged and for ever dethroned ?

Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt; vigilemus.
 ecce minaciter imminet arbitri-
 ter ille supremus,—
 imminet, imminet, ut mala
 terminet, æqua coronet,
 recta remuneret, anxia liberet,
 æthera donet.

The world is very evil,
 The times are waxing late;
 Be sober and keep vigil,
 The Judge is at the gate,
 The Judge who comes in mercy,
 The Judge who comes with might,
 To terminate the evil,
 To diadem the right.

Little is known of Bernard except that he was born at Morlaix in Brittany, of British parents, and spent his life in the great monastery of Cluny, then pre-eminent in Europe in wealth and power. It was the chief school of great churchmen. Its abbot enjoyed a more than regal dignity; after the Pope he was the most influential ruler in Christendom, with a chapter of 3000 monks and 2000 monastic houses under him. But its wealth was its undoing. Already in Bernard's time the salt was losing its savour. His sorrow over the corruptions he saw working destructively in the world outside was intensified by what he discerned of the leaven of evil within. He poured out his soul in a long satire *De Contemptu Mundi* (*On Contempt for the World*). It is written in the

curious hurrying rhymed metre of which the lines given above are an example, a metre so difficult to handle that Bernard himself attributed his success in carrying it on through 3000 lines to the special grace of God. Dr Neale considered this the most lovely of medieval poems. His genius has converted sections of it into classic English hymns—one of the rare cases in which the translations are finer than the original: “Brief life is here our portion” (597), “For thee, O dear, dear country” (598), “Jerusalem the golden” (599).

A Statesman and Revivalist.—Montalembert, controverting Chateaubriand’s over-sentimental representation of the monasteries as chiefly hospitals for the sick and weak, declared them to be rather training places for the strong, “where not what was feeblest, but what was most robust and most vigorous in the Church’s life was to be found, where the men were moulded and fashioned who should afterwards rule the Church or convert the world.” Confirmation of this is presented by **Bernard of Clairvaux** (1091-1153), one of the noblest figures in the whole monastic line, and the most illustrious and powerful personality of his age. A Cistercian monk, he practised in his seclusion incredible austerities, and acquired such a reputation for saintliness that people from all parts sought his guidance, and even thrones and the loftiest of spiritual dignities invoked his counsel and bowed humbly to his rebuke. He had the statesman’s mind. Power flowed unsought into his hands. Though officially never more than the simple abbot of Clairvaux, he became an uncrowned Pope, the virtual arbiter of Europe. His personality was magnetic, his eloquence compelling. In his preaching he played on men’s hearts like a mighty master of music on the chords of his chosen instrument. And his conversions were numberless. For he was in the true evangelical succession, a flaming evangelist, fired by

the essential passion of the Gospel and burning to declare its central message, that Christ is the sinner's hope and only salvation.

The hymns attributed to him (249, 420, 421, 422, 423) are charged with this glowing spirit. But it seems clear that they are not his. They are taken from a long poem on the name of Jesus, which medieval writers called *The Rosy Hymn* or *The Jubilus of St Bernard*. This the great French scholar Dom Pothier has found in an eleventh-century manuscript ascribed to a Benedictine abbeſs, and the claim for St Bernard must now be abandoned. The original Latin form of Hymn 107, "Salve, caput cruentatum," the last of a series of seven poems addressed to the different members of Christ's body as it hung upon the Cross, is also ascribed, but without certainty, to him. Only three rhythmical hymns on St Victor and St Malachy seem authentically to be his, and they are said to show him to have been but a mediocre poet. Tradition, however, will long continue to associate the great hymns attributed to him with his honoured name.

A Famous Scholar.—The higher learning of which the monasteries were the home until the rise of the universities is exemplified in the *Hymnary* by the founder of the scholastic philosophy and the first of the modernists, **Pierre Abélard** (1079-1142). "A hero of romance within the Church, a refined spirit in a barbarous age, a founder of a school, and almost a martyr to an opinion, everything conspired to make Abélard an extraordinary personage." When he began teaching philosophy in Paris at the age of twenty-two, his mastery of dialectic, then looked upon as "the science of sciences," his daring rationalistic examination of accepted positions, and his victories in learned debate over the leading teachers of his day, drew all the world after him. But popularity

turned his head. His vanity was prodigious. Bernard of Clairvaux described him as "ignorant of nothing in heaven or on earth save only of himself." That one ignorance ruined him. The love-story of Abélard and Héloïse is familiar to multitudes who know nothing else about them. In the end of it disgrace and humiliation drove him for refuge into the Benedictine monastery of St Denis, where he assumed the habit of a monk, while Héloïse took the veil in the nunnery of Argenteuil. But he was in no sense a typical monk. His restless sceptical mind speedily embroiled him in trouble with his superiors; he poured ridicule on the legend which they accepted as gospel as to the identity of their patron saint. His intrepid spirit was in no wise broken by disaster, and no monastery could hold him. He resumed his public lectures, this time on theology, and again eager minds flocked to him. He could not, however, resist the temptation to throw down challenges to orthodoxy, and angry suspicion was turned to an examination of his own doctrine. Twice he was charged with heresy, the second time at the instance of Bernard, and each time he was condemned. But not long after his time his heresy became the new orthodoxy; the principle he fought for, of rationalising theology, became the characteristic principle of the official scholastic teaching.

It is curious to find a mind like this among hymn-writers. Yet he has the distinction of being the only man who produced an entire hymn-book with his own hand, at a single stretch of his powers. He wrote it for Héloïse, for use in her nunnery of the Paraclete, where in later years he frequently visited her. It is a remarkable piece of work, for the copiousness of its contents, the novelty of the forms he uses, and the beauty of many of the hymns. He had a reputation as a melodist also. From his *Hymnus Paracletensis* Hymn 224 is taken.

VIII

NAMELESS POETS AND MUSICIANS OF THE CLOISTERS

The poets of the cloisters had ample opportunity of exercising their powers. Monastic life was elaborately organised. Each day was divided by the Hours of the Breviary, hours of daily prayer. The Vigil or Nocturn Service, later called Mattins, included three nocturns to correspond with the three watches of the night, at 9 p.m., 12 midnight, and 3 a.m. The Morning Service, called Mattin Lauds, was recited at dawn. The Day Offices or Lesser Hours consisted of Prime, at 6 a.m., in preparation for the day's work, Terce, at 9 a.m., Sext, at midday, None, at 3 p.m., and Vespers (Evensong) at 6 p.m., closing the labour of the day. Compline, at nightfall, prepared the monks for their nightly rest.

Each of these services had its own liturgical forms and its own special hymns. Thus arose a great cycle of Office Hymns, such as Ambrose's "O Lux beata Trinitas" (4), which was used at Vespers. But, in addition, there were hymns for the Seasons. Of these, "Gloriosi Salvatoris" (164) is an example; it was written for the festival of the Holy Name. "Immense labour was spent in providing second-rate festivals with third-rate or fourth-rate hymns." Saints' days also had each their appropriate hymns. Some were common to all saints' days, but each day had also to be provided with its "proper" hymn, and, as every country had its own local saints and made it a matter of duty to celebrate for each one the appropriate festal day, the number of these proper hymns for saints' days grew

to be very great. There were processional hymns also. "Salve, festa dies" (115) is a good example; it furnished the model for a vast number of compositions of this kind.

Of hymns for all these ceremonial uses great quantities are in existence. Most of them have none but an antiquarian value. Many, however, have been successfully adapted for modern use. Some of the older ones, especially, though rough in form, have a sincere devotional quality, a scriptural substance, and an objective directness, which fit them admirably for present-day worship.

The Gallican Church (French), which was begun by missionaries not from Rome but from the East, maintained for long its independence of Rome liturgically and otherwise. There were many local Breviaries; in 1791 no fewer than eighty French dioceses had special liturgies of their own. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a great deal of revision of these went on, and in the process many of the old hymns were edited severely and a number of new hymns were added. Prominent among these were the hymns contributed to the Paris Breviary of 1736 by **Charles Coffin** (1676-1749) who was Principal of the college at Beauvais, and, later, rector of the University of Paris; he was one of the leading spirits in the revision. Though his hymns were in Latin (78, 274, 440), they represent a departure from the traditional style, and have much more kinship with modern hymns than with those of the older Latin schools. Incidentally it may be mentioned that the independence of the Gallican Church ended in 1875, when the diocese of Orleans, the last to retain its own liturgy, surrendered it, and so brought about Roman liturgical unity throughout France.

Music was ardently cultivated in the monasteries and largely used in their services. From the time of Gregory

the Great, as already explained, plain-song was a fixed element in the Roman liturgy throughout the Church of the West. It was purely melodic. Harmony was yet unknown. To begin with, there was not even any notation: the melodies were memorised, and so passed on. The scales were different from ours. There was no strict time. The rhythm was determined not by metre but by the natural accent of the words. The tune was really a kind of free recitative, "designed to give the utmost rhetorical freedom and the vividness of a new kind of speech." Knowledge of this authorised form of church-song was required of every candidate for holy orders. No missionary was considered fully equipped for his task without a thorough training in it. When Augustine landed in Kent he had his retinue of singers with him, and their plaintive singing is said to have been a powerful factor in winning King Ethelbert and his people to the Christian faith. When Winfrid, an Anglo-Saxon monk, began his great mission to the Germans, he counted it part of his evangelising duty to school his barbarous proselytes in the Gregorian song. Charlemagne, King of the Franks and Roman Emperor (742-814), in his efforts to establish uniformity of religious practice throughout his dominions, endeavoured to secure that the Gregorian tones should be taught and sung in every church and school over which his authority could be asserted.

About 790 he brought two experts in the subject from its headquarters in the monastery of Monte Cassino, in Rome, to instruct the monks of St Gall in Switzerland, a monastery founded in the seventh century by an Irish monk of that name. Thenceforward St Gall was a radiating centre of this particular musical influence. Monks came thither from all quarters to study it, as formerly they had gone to Rome. One of its rulers, Ekkehard II., was able at length to say that the inhabitants

of this convent, "through their songs and melodies, as also through their teachings, filled the Church of God, not only in Germany, but in all lands, from one sea to the other, with splendour and joy." There were monasteries in which the musical element in worship was so elaborately developed that the divine praise was sung in them day and night without cessation, the monks dividing themselves into three choirs to take the services in rotation. Thus *laus perennis*, perpetual praise, rose from them to the throne of God.

St Gall was the source of a new kind of hymn called *Sequence*. At a certain point in the service of the mass, between the epistle and the gospel, it was customary to sing Alleluia. On the final vowels of this word the habit grew up of elaborating a vocal improvisation, with abundant, long-drawn-out flourishes. The wordlessness of this embellishment made it tedious, and, where it became fixed, memorising was difficult. At the great abbey of Jumièges on the Seine some one conceived the idea of easing the strain by furnishing words for the melody. When Jumièges was sacked by the Northmen, one of the scattered monks found his way to St Gall, and on his suggestion a gifted monk there named Notker, nicknamed Balbulus, the Stammerer (840-912), took up the practice. At first the words set to the "wild phrases" of the melody were in rhythmical prose, and the compositions were thus called *Proses*; "*Cantemus cuncti melodum*" (14) is a famous example of the Alleluiatic Prose. When metre was introduced into them, they were called *Sequences*. In their final form both words and music were invented, a new kind of hymn being thus created. The French type began with the word Alleluia, out of which the invention had sprung (as in Hymn 124); the German with a line which represented the words set to the musical improvisation with which the final syllable of the Alleluia

used to close. Both forms were binary, two lines in each verse.

A famous hymn of this class is the *Gloria, laus, et honor* (91) of **St Theodulph** of Orleans (c. 821). He appears first on the scene as abbat of Fleury, then as a favourite of the emperor at the Court of Charlemagne, where, however, he was much troubled by the Scots, with whom, he says, no Goth could ever agree, and with regard to whom he uses language of no measured strength and freedom. He was a man of learning, humour, and capacity, and, when promoted to the bishopric of Orleans, he proved an enlightened and energetic prelate. But under the reign of Louis the Pious he fell under suspicion of conspiracy and was thrown into prison in a monastery at Angers. Tradition has it that in confinement he composed this hymn, which is part of a much longer poem, and sang it at his window one Palm Sunday morning as the king was passing on his way to church. When Louis, entranced by what he heard, learned who the composer and singer was, he ordered his release and restoration to his see. But the story is not to be trusted. It is doubtful whether Theodulph was ever released, and certain that if he was, he died soon afterwards. His hymn has traditionally been used, with much picturesque ceremonial, as a processional hymn on Palm Sunday morning.

Sequence hymns multiplied enormously; somewhere about a thousand of them are known. They had an honoured place in the liturgy and became immensely popular all over northern Europe. In most medieval missals there is one for most Sundays and holy days, but the Council of Trent in 1570 abolished them all except five, one of which was the "Veni, Creator Spiritus" (182, 184) appointed for Whitsunday. The "Stabat Mater" (99) and the "Dies Iræ," though not Sequences in form, were used as such, the one for Good Friday, the other for

the Mass of the Dead. The Gallican Church, in the exercise of its independence, disregarded the Council of Trent's ban upon these much-loved hymns, of which one of its distinguished sons, Adam of St Victor (twelfth century), described by Archbishop Trench as "the foremost among the sacred Latin poets of the Middle Ages," was the most copious and distinguished author; thus the Sequences continued in France to be sung by choir and people until well down in the seventeenth century. Then, in the course of the liturgical "reform" which has already been referred to, they were abolished, and the last was heard "without pity, without shame, and without taste, of these poems which had been chanted in the vaulted roofs of a thousand churches for four centuries."

The Growth of Music.—Wherever, as you follow the development of the science of music, you come upon any new invention in those medieval times that definitely advances it, you are safe to imagine in the background "shadowy monkish figures," theorising, experimenting, trying to discover new possibilities in music and to enlarge the field of its conquests. Thus it was a Flemish monk named Hucbald who, in the tenth century, first recorded what had been accomplished in the art of organum, which was the first step towards what moderns know as harmony; by his time it was already systematised and established in regular church use. And through all the subsequent stages of development until counterpoint—really plural or parallel melodies blending in a harmonious synthesis—made plain the way to the achievements of modern composition, it was church musicians who led the van of the advance.

It follows that to them we owe **choral art**. Until it was systematised, however, the introduction of it into church use was fruitful in abuses. So early as 1322 one of the Popes in a decree forbidding the license that was being

taken, complained that "the voices are continually running to and fro, intoxicating the ear, not soothing it . . . and in this way devotion, the true end of worship, is little thought of, and wantonness, which ought to be eschewed, is on the increase." The liberties the singers assumed were extraordinary. They exercised the right of extemporising the subordinate choral parts. Sometimes their embellishments were thought out, but as often they were the haphazard invention of the moment, with results that made havoc of the harmony. Many protests are extant against the cacophony thus produced. One writer in the eleventh century compared the singers with drunk men, who indeed find their way home after their potations, but do not know how they got there. Another likened them to a blind man trying to strike a dog. A third protested, "Does such oxen-bellowing belong in the Church? Is it believed that God can be graciously inclined by such an uproar?" And Aëlred, the Scottish abbot of Rivaulx, described how the singers brought in absurd gestures, swayed their bodies, twisted their lips, and rolled their eyes, with each note. By and by the license went so far that the singers would introduce into the most sacred service secular and even ribald words. Even great composers introduced secular melodies, like the French "*L'homme armé*" and the English "*Western Wynde*" into the solemn service of the mass.

The scandal became so great that the Council of Trent actually faced the possibility of having, in the interests of reverence and indeed decency, to suppress the use of music in church services altogether. That policy of despair was made unnecessary by **Palestrina** (1525-94). It does not belong to this story to describe how he won the title of "saviour of church music." Enough that he raised church music from the mire into which it was sinking, purified it, and by his own inimitable genius set the

standard for church art in this field for all time. It is, however, to another quarter that we must look for the vindication of the rights of the people to a share in the Church's song. Already, in Palestrina's time, the first battles for these rights were won.

IX

WHAT THE FRIARS BEQUEATHED TO US

By the thirteenth century it was evident that monasticism was not able to save the world. The Church was then at the zenith of its power, but it stood helpless in face of the desperate moral and social condition of Europe. The period is called the age of chivalry. In reality it was an age of ruffianism and unchecked brigandage. Plunder and destruction reduced the most fertile lands to wildernesses. The dispossessed people flocked into the towns and lived there huddled in unspeakable slums, in such squalor and penury that they rotted and died like flies. From time to time visitations of famine and pestilence swept them away in numbers so huge that to us the report of them seems incredible. No words can paint too darkly the corruption that prevailed. And the dominant class of the clergy; the monks, were unfitted for dealing with it. They were largely of the upper classes, remote in sympathy from the common people, and secluded in their monasteries far away from the crowded warrens of the cities and the terrible conditions of their life. Moreover, their early simplicity and piety had waned, and they had become little better than rich landholders, absorbed in their own individual and communal life, and making no attempt to deal with the ghastly social problem except by the distribution of alms at their gates to the poor who came begging from them. The men of the towns hated them as supercilious aristocrats, and stood aloof in dark resentment from the religion they represented.

The Franciscans.—Into this world and these conditions came **Francis of Assisi** (1182-1286), incarnating the spirit of the Gospel, lifting up the light of the Christ-life and making it shine fair in the eyes of men again. The story of how he renounced everything in the name of Christ, wedded Poverty as his bride, and went out under the banner of self-sacrifice and love to do battle against spiritual wickedness and to win men back to the simplicity that is in Christ, is one of the greatest stories in the world. He went on his journeys singing. A troubadour of God, His gleeman, he claimed to be. He was the friend of all living things, a lover of nature as well as of men. Love exhaled from his presence. At his coming light went up in the gross darkness in which the people sat. His simplicity and sincerity, his sunny and loving spirit, his comradeship with the poorest, even with social pariahs and outcasts, first astonished men and then conquered them. In him they saw his Master: Christ stood out visible before them, living, loving again.

Francis and his followers had none but a simple Gospel, Christ first, Christ last, Christ all and in all. Wherever they went they gathered people together and preached Christ to them in plain homespun speech, lit up with humour and simple illustration, such as all could understand. They were helpers, too, of all who had need. That was their mission. Brothers they called themselves (*fratres*, whence “friars”), and so they were, brothers to one another and to all men; and to make it clear that they were in no sense claimants of any honour, Francis insisted that they should call themselves *Fratres Minores* (whence Minorites), the community of the Lesser Brethren, for none could be or should be less than they. “The monk was an aristocrat. The friar belonged to the great unwashed.”

Wherever they went, people flocked to hear the itinerant

evangelists, and, as they listened, faith rose in them like a passion. The whole continent stirred from its long sleep and began to draw the breath of a new life. It looked as if the needed reformation of religion was at hand. But the time was not yet ripe. Francis was no thinker, and was never able to beat out into clear principles the ideas that guided him. Though essentially a Protestant, he lacked the intellectual force to be a leader of reform; he had not enough indeed to save his own movement from the extinction of its spirit under the throttling hands of the Church. He had the mortification of seeing his spiritual ideal tarnished and lowered and his work virtually undone by the meddling and unspiritual hierarchy, and he died of a broken heart. But his life remains a glory in the world. "Most blameless and gentle of saints," said Dean Milman, and even Renan declared that since Jesus Christ, Francis of Assisi has been the one perfect Christian. It is good to have his famous "Sun Song," or "Song about Creatures," (13) full of his own sunny and joyous spirit and set to one of the most magnificent of tunes, to use in our worship now.

After his passing, the darkness fell again—how deeply may be judged from the hymn his biographer and disciple, **Thomas of Celano**, a Franciscan friar of the thirteenth century, wrote—the "Dies Iræ." Again, in the universal gloom, men saw no hope but in the return of Christ for judgment. That last dread scene which was thus looming upon their minds, this hymn pictures in language of unsurpassable grandeur. The "troublesome dactylic restlessness" of the metre has been criticised, but it heightens the effect. The recurrent fall of the triple rhythm has been compared to blow following blow of the hammer on the anvil. This hymn has been well declared the most sublime, beyond comparison, of the hymns of the Middle Ages. It was written for private

devotion in a monastic cell, and not for public worship. Its unsuitability for modern worship led to its exclusion in its full form from the present *Hymnary*; it is represented only by the verses of Sir Walter Scott (161), from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*—sufficiently represented, for it is seldom sung. Its tone is too medieval; the literalness of its interpretation of the Last Things no longer expresses the faith or feeling of the Church. But in the treasury of the Church's devotional literature the awe and tenderness that breathe through it and the majesty of its conceptions ensure it a permanent place.

To the same period belongs the "Stabat Mater" (99) of **Jacopone da Todi** (Jacopo dei Benedetti), born about 1228. He too was a Minorite, though by choice only a lay brother. He was in early life a lawyer, prosperous, pleasure-loving, an amateur of music, literature, and art, and no lover of religion. About 1268 the tragic death of his wife brought about his sudden conversion; he joined the Franciscan order, became "a minstrel of God," and so much of "a kind of Christian Diogenes" that his mental stability was doubted: Jacopone is the nickname his fellow-townsmen gave him as a local "character." He was a fiery hater of abuses, and his combative spirit moved him to satires so fierce on Pope Boniface VI. that he was sentenced to excommunication and imprisoned for two years. Purified by his sufferings, he wrote on his release some of the most mystical of his poems. For he was a poet of power, the first to give the Franciscan spirit artistic expression. His *laudi*, songs in the simple metre of the vernacular hymns of the period, were his medium for the expression of the most profound mystical ideas. The impression of eccentricity he made was largely due to his mysticism. He stood for the extremest form of the Franciscan rule, in the most literal faithfulness to St Francis' ideals. The "Stabat Mater" is not attri-

buted to him in the *Hymnary*, but there is much ground in tradition and in his mystical verse for giving him at least the benefit of the doubt. Our version, to purge it of its mariolatry, is rather a paraphrase than a translation of the original, but no modification can rob it of the pathos and the power with which it portrays the sorrow, before the Cross, of the mother of the Lord.

When those weird sectaries, the Flagellants, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, wandered through Europe in procession, stripped to the waist and with covered heads, and scourging themselves with leathern thongs until the blood streamed from them, in penance for the sins of the world, this hymn was one of the *laudi* of Jacopone and other hymns of the Passion which they sang as they went their way.

The Dominicans.—While Francis was moving in Italy, another earnest spirit of a very different order was being stirred to action in Spain. St Dominic was distressed by the heresy and schism he saw around him on every side, and when he took the spiritual sword in his hand it was to wage war, not against ungodliness, but against ignorance and error. He founded an order of Preaching Friars, who from the dark colour of their rough serge habit, came to be known as “black friars,” as the Franciscans came to be known as “grey friars” from the coarse grey frock they wore. In due time the Dominicans followed Francis’ example in vowing themselves to poverty. They were “trained men of education, addressing themselves mainly to the educated classes, and sure of being understood wherever Latin, the universal medium of communication among scholars, was in daily and hourly use.” They established schools, and sent their preachers everywhere throughout Europe, for they were the only order to set preaching first among their activities.

But dispensations from the obligation to preach were

granted to those who wished to devote themselves to scholarly pursuits, and thus the order became famous for the scholars and doctors it bred; they stood in the forefront of the intellectual life of the Middle Ages. Among these, none was more eminent than **Thomas Aquinas** (1228-1274), son of a count of Aquino in the kingdom of Naples. He is ranked as one of the four great Doctors of the Latin Church, and is distinguished as "the Angelic Doctor." In his youth he was so heavy of figure and sparing in speech that his fellow-students under Albertus Magnus, another illustrious Dominican, nicknamed him "the dumb ox." One day the promptitude and brilliance of his answers moved his astonished master to exclaim, "This dumb ox will give such a bellow in learning as all the world shall hear." The prophecy was amply fulfilled. He carried the scholastic method, of which Abélard was the founder, to its consummation. Since Aristotle, no more masterly intellect had attempted the systematisation of knowledge. His *Summa Theologiæ* is still one of the text-books of Roman Catholic theology.

But while scholasticism furnished an excellent intellectual gymnastic for those who were trained in it, it was spiritually arid and barren. As Trench says, "Spinning all its threads out of its own consciousness, as the spider from its own bowels, and persuaded that there was nothing which it could not spin from them, it had obstinately refused to learn aught from experience or history, and, thus wilfully closing one of the two main inlets by which knowledge comes to man, it had never been better than a Cyclops with a single eye, while even from that single eye all higher vision was going or had gone" by the time of the Reformation. The schoolmen had no living message for their age. Inveterately conservative, they resisted every effort at spiritual revival or any kind

of reform, and defended every abuse and justified every superstition for which the Church needed apologists. There was not a gleam of hope in them for a decaying faith or a dying world. It is interesting none the less to derive one of our great communion hymns (319) from the man who represents the finest intellectual and spiritual flower of this great order.

The friars were the evangelists of Europe for three hundred years. They numbered in their ranks some of the finest minds and noblest spirits of those centuries. But the movement quickly declined from the high promise of its beginning. By the time of the Reformation the name of the friars had become a byword and a hissing, and their manner of life a scandal which could not otherwise be dealt with than by scavenging it out of the way.

X

HOW MARTIN LUTHER STARTED THE POPULAR HYMN

WHILE the world lasts, the name of the monk who shook and to a great extent broke the power of Rome will stand among the highest in the roll of its heroic spirits. Principal Lindsay has borne witness that if eras can be dated, modern history began with the victory for faith and the freedom of the spirit which was won, under God, by the resolute independence, the indomitable courage, and the religious genius of **Martin Luther**.

The story of how the miner's son of Eisleben (1483-1546) became a monk, and followed the tradition and practice of the Roman Church until he discovered that "no monkish works" could bring any peace to his soul; how, toiling on his knees up the Santa Scala at Rome, he heard a voice saying, "The just shall live by faith," and rose to his feet in possession of the key-word of the Reformation; how he studied the New Testament until the full light came, and was driven finally to break with the Church which was hiding that light from men; how he braved Pope and Emperor together in one of the most kindling scenes in history, and was not overborne or daunted even when they both set their ban upon him; how he set the forces of Protestantism in motion, gave to his fellow-countrymen the Bible, the Catechism, and a hymn-book, all in their own tongue, and, in so doing, fixed the German language—the great story is too well known to need recounting. But it concerns us to tell the story here of the price-

less service he rendered to the development of popular church-song.

The Roman Theory of Worship.—From the time of Gregory the Great, the people had been deprived of the opportunity of taking any direct share in the Church's offering of praise. According to the Roman theory of worship, all that is essential is done for the congregation by the clergy. The worship does not emanate from the people, but from the priest who mediates for them. It is not necessary that the individual worshipper should follow what is done for him; he need not so much as hear a word that is being said. Strictly speaking, it is not necessary even that he should be present; and, if present, he is free to offer his own private devotions while the official prayers of the liturgy are being sung or said. In such a conception of worship, what place is there for the people, that they should require to sing? The priests and the choir do the essential singing for them. If hymns are permitted at all, even now, it is as an extra, a concession, and always outside of the main ordinance of worship.

Against this sacerdotal theory Luther asserted the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Every soul has the right of direct access to God, by faith in Jesus Christ, and therefore the right also of presenting his own prayers and praises to God without priestly intermediation. "The substance of worship," Luther said, "is, that our dear Lord speaks with us through His Holy Word, and we in return speak with Him through prayer and song of praise." When the sacrifice of praise is being offered, therefore, the people should be active, not passive; it is their right to give their souls utterance, to make their voice to be heard on high.

Luther's Precursors.—In various parts of Europe they had been doing their valiant best to make their voices heard, before Luther's day. In England the

Lollards—the soft singers, as the meaning probably is—had made a plaintive beginning which too soon died into silence. In Finland and the other countries bordering the Baltic the songs were being sung which the *Piae Cantiones* preserve to us; one of the tunes is in the *Hymnary* (60), and another is that of the well-known carol, “Good King Wenceslas.” In Bohemia, since 1504, a hymn-book had been in use among the Bohemian Brethren (144, 199), and Michael Weisse, a monk of Breslau who had been converted to Protestantism by Luther’s early writings, translated a number of its hymns into German, in 1531. And in Germany itself a large body of vernacular hymns had come into existence (no fewer than 1500 of them have been collected), and were in use, not in any official service of the Church, but on pilgrimages and at festivals. In *The Life of St Bernard* it is related that in the Cathedral at Cologne, at every miracle supposed to be wrought by the saint, “the people broke out into hymns of praise in the German tongue, and the writer regrets that when they left German soil this custom ceased, as the nations that spoke the Romanic languages did not possess native hymns after the manner of the others.”

His Hymns.—These precursors, doubtless, all contributed to the leading Luther needed. But his main inspiration came from the Book of Psalms. There he found his models; he set himself to find for his people just such sincere, simple, reverent outpourings of the heart to God. “It is my intention,” he wrote, “after the example of the prophets and the ancient fathers, to make German psalms for the people; that is, spiritual songs, whereby the Word of God may be kept alive among them by singing.” And he was determined that the requirement of simplicity should be met. The words must be “all quite plain and common, such as the common people

may understand, yet pure, and skilfully handled." He lamented the lack of poets for this great task. As the event was speedily to show, the poets were there; but they needed an example. And who should furnish it, if not the man who saw most clearly what the occasion called for? Luther himself set to work and produced just what was needed—hymns that were models of their kind, simple, strong, direct, full of the spirit of the Evangel. They ignored controverted questions; their subjects were the great verities of the Faith, and themes that were appropriate for the Church's festivals. One in the *Hymnary* (407), admirably shows how the sap and marrow of the Gospel filled them. Another (526), trumpet-tongued — "God Almighty's Grenadier March," as Frederick the Great called it, and Heine, "the Marseillaise Hymn of the Reformation"—is steeped in heroic memories. There is an inextinguishable fire of faith and noble courage in it that ensures for it an abiding place among the greatest of the Church's songs. The third (56), a Christmas hymn written for his five-year-old son Hans, reveals the tenderness which was not the least of the qualities that were blended in the rich humanity of this heroic man.

The Music of his Hymns.—The hymns would have made little headway if they had not been matched with fitting music. Here also Luther sighed for skilled men to give the lead. Fortunately he was himself a passionate lover of the musical art. It afforded him his chief recreation. He played well on the lute and the flute. He had been a fine singer as a boy, and during his years in the cloister had studied deeply the polyphonic master-works of the Church. Probably it was well that he was rather an enthusiastic amateur than a technician in the art. His eye was not diverted by any undue pre-occupation with artistic canons from the chief mark to be aimed at—the provision of tunes which the people would love

to sing. He invited two trusted musical experts to spend three weeks with him at Wittenberg, and they set themselves to experiment with possible melodies. Whence did they derive them?

Some came from the Roman service-books, for, with a just eclecticism, he wished to retain in use all that he could of the music he had loved in the Church of his upbringing; others came from the vernacular hymns; and others from the *Volkslieder*, those popular songs in which Germany has always been passing rich, and in which the true spirit of the people has in every age found a voice. Luther was of too catholic a spirit to exclude these from his area of choice; the tune to which "Vom Himmel hoch" (56), for example, was first written was that of a popular song of the time, "I come from lands afar." He had no scruple about borrowing. "I pounce," he might have said, "upon what is mine wherever I find it." Accusations of plagiarism, had he foreseen them, would have had no terrors for him. But he was not content to accept anything uncritically; he was jealous of congruity between the theme of the verse and the spirit of the music. He carefully tested the propriety for their purpose of the melodies he considered, and where necessary moulded them into suitability. While his friends, Conrad Rupff and Johann Walther, sat waiting to take notes, Luther marched up and down the room trying over suggested melodies on his flute, and, no doubt, singing them from time to time in "his seemingly weak but penetrating voice"—his "high and clear voice," as another describes it—for "he never wearied or could have enough of singing." Alterations were freely made. On occasion, phrases from different airs were patched together to compose one whole. The sources of "Ein' feste Burg" (526), for instance, are believed to have been discovered; it is said to have been made up of

borrowed fragments. Fortunately, no copyright law stood in the way of his free treatment of his material. Whether he composed any original tunes himself is a disputed question. The probability that he did is strong, though he claimed none as his own. Even, however, if he was no more than an adaptor, he showed himself such a master in selection and adaptation that he deserves the unqualified credit of originating the tunes that bear his name. They proved at the time to be perfect instruments for their purpose, and to this day they retain their robust vitality.

When the tunes were shaped, Rupff and Walther, and others later, provided the polyphonic settings. For the most part the singing was in unison, but when around the melody in the tenor Luther heard the parallel melodies of these settings sung, the delight of the artist in him was unbounded. He speaks of the wonderful wisdom of God shown in such music, "when the other parts play around the air, leading as it were to a heavenly dance with it; meeting with pleasure, parting in pain. . . . Whoever is not moved by such art as this, must of a truth be a coarse clod, not worthy to hear such lovely music, but only the waste wild bray of the old chanting, and the songs and music of the dogs and pigs."

In 1524 he published the first hymn-book of evangelical Germany. It contained fourteen hymns by himself, three by Paul Speratus, and one anonymous. A later collection in the same year contained fourteen more by Luther. A third in 1525 added six more to his tale. The remaining twelve of which he was author appeared in five different books which were issued at intervals up to 1543. Other writers followed his example. The printing-presses were kept busy throwing off books and broadsheets. By the time of his death some sixty collections of hymns had appeared.

The popular effect was immediate, magical. Germany's soul was thrilled with surprise and joy. All over the country, among all classes of the people, the voice of praise was heard. In Sir George Adam Smith's words, "In place of the frozen ritualism of the Church, there broke forth from all lands of the Reformation, as though it were birds in springtime, a great burst of hymns and prayers with the clear notes of the Gospel in the common tongue." The accounts of the people's response seem barely credible to us. "We read marvellous stories . . . of Lutheran missionaries entering Catholic churches during service and drawing away the whole congregation by their singing; of wandering evangelists standing at street corners and in the market-places singing to excited crowds, then distributing the hymns on leaflets so that the people might join in the pæan, and so winning entire cities to the new faith almost in a day."

Coleridge may have exaggerated in saying that "Luther did as much for the Reformation by his hymns as by his translation of the Bible." That is hardly likely to be the cool verdict of history. But the leaders of the Roman Church in his own time took very much that view. "By his songs he has conquered us," said Cardinal Cajetan bitterly. A Jesuit declared, "Luther's songs have damned more souls than all his books and speeches." The editor of a German hymn-book in 1565 gave a surer estimate of their spiritual effect when he said that the hymn "Nun freut euch" alone had brought to the faith many hundreds of Christians who otherwise would not have known even Luther's name. The truth is that the sterling sense and genius of this man had forged a powerful new weapon of the faith, and that the conquests won by it were incalculable. Great masses of the people, with his hymns and melodies on their lips, sang themselves into the creed of the Protestant Reformation.

XI

HOW GERMAN RELIGIOUS LIFE AFTER LUTHER IS REFLECTED IN ITS HYMNS

IN the seventy years after Luther's death the religious enthusiasm awakened by the Reformation suffered a grievous decline. It was a time of great material prosperity ; literature and the arts flourished, and the standard of comfort rose high. But the abatement of spiritual fervour which usually accompanies easy conditions was very evident, and of moral declension there were many disquieting signs. Politically the new religious situation created a dangerous tension. The imperial authority was far gone in decay, and its ill-advised attempt to curb Protestant freedom was soon to bring it down in ruin. Social discontent blazed up in frequent risings of the people ; the Peasants' War especially did untold injury to the religious life of the country. And the Church was torn by controversy, Lutherans, Calvinists, Catholics, all at fierce war with one another and, alas ! also among themselves. The spiritual atmosphere was poisoned by the acrimony with which the disputants fought. Even sweet-natured men like Nicolai and saints like Gerhardt and Scheffler dipped their pens in venom when they took part in the fray. A purging discipline was needed to exorcise the evil spirit, and in due time it came.

In this transition time **Nicolaus Selnecker** (1530-92) was frequently a storm-centre. In the Lutheran Church he held high official positions which made him a focus of the domestic controversies on the doctrine of the sacra-

ments by which that Church was riven. From the distractions of his public life his peace-loving spirit sought refuge in the Psalter, in music, and in the composition of hymns. Many of these hymns betray the intense strain under which he was living, but the only one which, with its beautiful chorale, is included in the *Hymnary* (278) breathes the spirit of peace. So clouded did the skies become for men of faith in those days that sunlessness and sadness subdue the tone of almost everything they wrote. The joyous note of the Reformation is no longer heard. Once more forebodings haunt them of impending catastrophe. As in the dark days of the Middle Ages they turn wistfully to the thought of the redemption from evil conditions which the return of Christ will bring. Thus **Philip Nicolai** (1556-1608), during a time of plague when people were dying in hundreds round him, felt that there was no refuge for his spirit but in thoughts of the coming city of God and the glory of its King. The sustained majesty of the conceptions of the hymn which he wrote under this inspiration, "Wake, awake! for night is flying" (162), and the incomparable grandeur of its tune, which has been called "the king of chorales," place it among the very greatest of the Church's hymns.

The Thirty Years War.—Upon the country distressed by these conditions there burst the calamitous Thirty Years War (1618-48). It was a war between Catholics and Protestants, the Emperor Ferdinand II. having determined to suppress the liberties Protestantism had gained. At first the fortune of war was with him, and the persecutions to which the Protestant populations were subjected rivalled those of the worst days of Philip II. of Spain. Then came the Lion of the North, Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, and retrieved the sinking fortunes of the Protestants. But he was not strong enough to win a decisive

victory. The opponents were equally matched ; neither could afford to yield. So year after year the tide of battle ebbed and flowed across central Europe, and by the time it was stayed, the country was in ruins. Civilisation well-nigh disappeared. Robbers infested the routes of travel, and the soldiers emulated them in their brutal depredations. The people fled for safety to the cities. There they might be besieged, as Leipsic was five, and Magdeburg six times. They might starve for lack of food. Or pestilence might decimate them. Villages were depopulated and considerable towns reduced to a mere handful of inhabitants by the plague. By the time the Peace of Westphalia brought the anarchy to an end, four-fifths of the population had perished, an even greater proportion of the wealth of the country was destroyed, and the land was virtually a desert. Two hundred years were needed to repair the ruin of this time.

But the universal peril and distress threw men back upon God. There was a great revival of religion, and, with it, a wonderful quickening of intellectual life and literary activity. Many of the greatest of German hymns sprang directly out of the tribulations through which those who wrote them were passing. Hymn 541, for instance, reflects the lawlessness that prevailed. Practically the only university in Germany that was able to keep its organisation intact was that of Königsberg. When **Georg Neumark** (1621-81) tried to cross Germany from his native Thuringia to reach it, he and the company of merchants he was travelling with were attacked and robbed of all they possessed. He had to find employment to earn enough to make the university possible, but in the universal ruin of industry there was no work to be had. When, after long and fruitless wandering, work was found for him at Kiel, this hymn was written to express his overflowing thankfulness to God, and to call

others to assurance that those who trust in God will never be forsaken.

In Hymn 216, **Matthäus Apelles von Löwenstern** (1594-1648), a saddler's son who rose to high rank in the imperial service, expressed such prayers as must have risen continually from innumerable hearts under the strain of watching the issue hanging uncertain while the tides of destruction flowed to and fro. In Hymn 217 we hear the actual clash of battle. For long this hymn was believed to have been written by Gustavus Adolphus himself, but it was really composed by **Johann Michael Altenburg** (1584-1640), on receipt of the news of the victory of Leipsic in 1631. None the less, it was Gustavus' swan-song. On the morning of the fateful day of Lützen, in November 1632, battle being imminent, the troops were paraded for worship and this hymn was sung. Before the attack "Ein' feste Burg" (526) and another hymn-tune were played by the kettle-drums and trumpets, the soldiers joining with one voice. After prayer, Gustavus cried aloud, "Jesu, Jesu, help me to-day to fight for the honour of Thy holy Name." When the day ended, the prayer had been answered: the field was won, but the victor lay dead upon it.

In Hymn 29 **Martin Rinkart** has been supposed to have celebrated the Peace of Westphalia, which in 1648 brought the war to an indecisive end. The supposition is baseless, but the hymn might well have been the outpouring of his thanksgiving at the ending of the long nightmare the horrors of war had meant for him. Eilenburg, a walled town, was crowded with refugees; pestilence broke out among them, and as the only clergyman left, he had to bury 4480 people. A famine followed, and he impoverished himself and incurred crushing liabilities to secure food for the starving people. Worn out by his toils and anxieties, he died in the year following the Peace.

His hymn is now the German *Te Deum*, and is sung on all occasions of national thanksgiving.

The life of **Paul Gerhardt** (1607-1676) illustrates the inheritance of trouble into which those who were children when the war broke out inevitably came. He qualified for the Lutheran ministry, but in the universal disorganisation there was for long no employment for him ; he was forty-five years old before he received a charge. His hymns brought him into notice, and he became the honoured and beloved minister of the great church of St Nicholas in Berlin. But the bitterness of inter-church feeling is by nothing better illustrated than by this, that a man of his noble spirit, rather than pledge himself to abstain from preaching against the Calvinists, thought it his duty to forfeit his charge. The fashion of preaching had become so predominantly polemical that the most spiritually-minded conceived of its function as rather to defend an orthodox creed than to proclaim a regenerative Gospel. Gerhardt's mind was profoundly spiritual. His later years were spent under heavy shadow : his portrait at Lübben describes him as " a divine sifted in Satan's sieve " ; yet his hymns express the most beautiful and fervent faith. They place him at the head of all German hymn-writers ; more than thirty of them are classics. (41, 107, 284, 432, 546, 547.)

The Mystics. — In Gerhardt a changing tone is perceptible, indicative of a changing attitude. Hitherto German hymnody has been of the objective type, concerned with the great realities of faith and not with the moods or experiences of those who sing about them. They are not individualistic or introspective. The pronouns *I* and *my* rarely occur in them. But now the mind begins to turn inward ; the individualistic hymn begins to appear. Sixteen of Gerhardt's hymns begin with *I*. This tendency continues in **Johann Franck** (1624-77), to whom we owe

"Schmücke dich" (324), one of the greatest of all communion hymns. The longing for inward mystical union with Christ, here most movingly expressed, becomes from this time increasingly manifest. And in **Johann Scheffler** "Angelus Silesius" (1624-77), it attains supreme expression. Trained in the strictest school of Lutheranism, he was attracted by natural affinity to the study of the mystics. While pursuing his professional studies in medicine at Leyden he was drawn into a circle of students of the writings of Jakob Böhme. On settling to his profession at Württemberg-Oels, he found the hard formalism and bitter dogmatism which were then characteristic of Lutheranism so antagonistic to the type of teaching which to him held the heart of spiritual truth, that when finally the publication of his poems was forbidden because of their mystical tendency, he resigned his post, got into touch with the Jesuits at Breslau, and, finding them sympathetic, and being introduced by them to the writings of Tauler and the medieval mystics, he was drawn into the Roman Church and its priesthood. His sore experience may excuse the violence of his many controversial writings, the more because the tone of them is absent from his hymns. These breathe a very passion of devotion to the Saviour; some of them are among the finest of our expressions of the soul's clinging love to Him. "These finer hymns are the work of a true poet, almost perfect in style and beauty of rhythm, concise and profound; the fruits indeed, it may be said, of Mysticism, but of Mysticism chastened and kept in bounds by deep reverence and by a true and fervent love to the Saviour. Scheffler holds a high place in the first rank of German sacred poets, and is much the finest of the post-Reformation Roman Catholic hymn-writers" (431, 496).

With the mystics should be ranked **Christian Knorr von Rosenroth** (1636-89), who began as a student of

the cabalistic sciences and a seeker of the philosopher's stone and ended his search by finding Christ (262). And in the same group a place belongs to **Gerhard Tersteegen** (1697-1769). He was a son of the Reformed Church, but withdrew from it because of its moderatism, for it also was then much more concerned with dogma than with life. To his inheritance from that Church he owes the firm grasp of Scripture and the close fidelity to it which were the gains reaped by the followers of Calvin from his principle that their materials of praise should be drawn from Holy Writ. But his heart was with the mystics in that desire for identification with Christ which led him to leave the world and practise his lowly life of renunciation and loving service. His rank is with the best of the hymn-writers of his country (192, 234, 459).

The Pietists.—After the Thirty Years War stagnation fell upon German religious life. Intellectuality took the place of spirituality, orthodoxy was prized above the religion of the heart. In 1670 Philipp Jakob Spener began a movement towards the revival of vital religion. Its interest was practical rather than doctrinal; it aimed at restoring reality to religion, and, while stressing the value of feeling and experience, at securing its close and practical touch with ordinary life. It became a great spiritual power; in all classes throughout Germany the “*Stillen im Lande*” were found. The University of Halle was founded as a result of it; under its inspiration great orphanages and other benevolent institutions arose at Halle also. A hymn-book for the movement was edited by **Johann Anastasius Freylinghausen** (1670-1739); five tunes from it are in the *Hymnary*. Both in words and music there is a warmer feeling than had as yet found expression in German hymnody. This book deeply affected English hymnody through John Wesley. Among notable hymn-writers of this school were **Adam Drese**

(1620-1702), a composer of operatic music who on coming under Pietistic influence burned all he had previously composed and began writing the religious music of which we have a fine example in the tune of Hymn 567; **Carl Heinrich Bogatzky** (1690-1774), author of the once well-known *Golden Treasury* (377); and **Count Zinzendorf** (1700-60), the founder of the Moravian Brotherhood. Much of the high spirituality and missionary fervour which make the Moravian name honourable drew its inspiration from Pietistic sources. There also Zinzendorf acquired the hymn-writing passion which led him to compose over 2000 hymns. Most of these are forgotten, but the best reach a high level, and are nobly expressive of the devotion to Christ which was the passion of his life (567).

With this school also should be classed the one great hymn-writer of the Reformed Church, **Joachim Neander** (1650-80). His Church, deriving from Calvin, used only psalms in public worship, and Neander did not write his hymns for public use; nevertheless they are of superlative quality, lyrical in a high degree, scriptural and evangelical (22, 448). He was a composer of no common merit as well. Nineteen of his melodies are in existence, and three are in the *Hymnary* (163, 234, 448). Dying at thirty, "in a short time he fulfilled a long time," and left a name ever gratefully to be remembered.

The reaction against Pietism is represented by **Erdmann Neumeister** (1671-1756), whose hymn, none the less, is deeply evangelical (394), and **Benjamin Schmolck** (1672-1737) to whom we owe a tender baptismal hymn (307).

Later German hymnody presents no features that call for special remark.

XII

WHY THE REFORMED CHURCH DID NOT USE HYMNS

IN the Churches of the Reformation there have been two main streams of church-song. On the one hand, there has been hymnody, with Luther as its fountainhead ; on the other, metrical psalmody, after the example set by Calvin. Luther carried on the tradition established by the Latin hymn ; his exemplars were in the Breviary. Calvin gave his adhesion to a still older tradition, which the Roman Church had maintained by the use of the prose psalms in its Daily Office ; he went back to the primitive days when the Church had no other means than the psalms for the singing of its praise. These two streams ran parallel for many generations ; then they converged and blended, and in most Churches of the Reformed order they run together to-day.

John Calvin (1509-1564) was born at Noyon in Northern France, and was educated first for the priesthood, then for the profession of law. Study of the Bible, however, led him to throw in his lot with those who were working for a reformation of religion. Very soon he was widely known as one of the most learned of theologians and one of the acutest minds of the age. At twenty-seven, he published his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, a monumental systematisation of the Reformed theology. In the same year (1536) he settled in Geneva, where his chief life-work was to be done. By the strength and trenchancy of his convictions and the dynamic force of his character, he soon acquired there a predominant

influence. The civic life and the morals of Geneva were alike in parlous state ; yet he succeeded in establishing a theocracy in the city which made it, according to Knox, " the most perfect school of Christ since the days of the apostles." There also he developed the system of ecclesiastical government which we know as Presbyterian. He showed remarkable insight in this, for the Presbyterian system fell into line with the democratic ideas which were then beginning to ferment in men's minds, and were destined in succeeding centuries to permeate social and political thought and to mould the institutions and shape the future of nations as well as Churches. For this reason, Presbyterianism has far outstripped the more conservative Lutheran system in its spread throughout the world. But Calvin was a strange compound of liberalism and narrowness. He was a born censor of morals. At school he was nicknamed " the accusative case." His entire lack of a sense of humour and of the broad humanity which was Luther's increased the severity of his temper. But assuredly there was enough in the moral laxity around him to justify his strictness, and it was a corollary, besides, of his controlling faith in the sovereignty of God. His was a dedicated spirit. His seal was a hand holding out a bleeding heart, to symbolise his offer to God of a slain heart as a sacrifice ; and his motto accorded with it, " I give Thee all ; I keep nothing back for myself."

His Ideals of Worship.—His puritanism appeared in his ideals of worship. It was his aim to return as nearly as possible to primitive usage. Praise, to him, was just one form of prayer ; it demanded, therefore, the utmost simplicity and reverence. He could find no materials of worship to satisfy his requirements in these respects but in the ancient Hebrew Psalms. With his master Augustine he agreed that there is nothing worthy of being sung to

God but what we have received from Him, and the only exceptions he allowed to the Psalter songs were versified versions of the Ten Commandments and the *Nunc Dimittis*. There was reason in his position. The Breviary hymns in use in the Roman Church had only to be looked at to show that there was grave danger of the dissemination of false doctrine through the medium of the non-scriptural hymn.

Fitting the Psalms for Popular Use.—Two things were necessary, Calvin saw, to fit the psalms for popular use—metricization, and the provision of attractive and suitable tunes.

1. **Metricization.**—The modern method of chanting the psalms in prose was yet unknown, and the Roman liturgical chant made popular participation impossible. The one way open, if the people were to be taught to sing, was to turn the psalms into metre. Calvin himself began the process. During a two years' exile in Strasburg he was much impressed by what he heard of the psalmody and hymnody in process of introduction there. "The German melodies," he wrote, "pleased me so much that I set myself to try what I could do in verse. Psalms xlv. and xxv. were my first attempts. I afterwards added others. . . . I have determined soon to publish." But with all his extraordinary gifts, he had in no sense those of a poet. Bovet says that his versions "have not the elegance or the facility of Marot, but show the clearness and firmness which distinguish all his prose." More than these qualities is required, however, and the fact was brought home to him.

Clément Marot (1497-1544), a highly educated and accomplished man, was a valet de chambre to Francis I. of France. Probably from Marguerite de Valois, the King's sister, he imbibed Huguenot views. Van Laun writes harshly of him, that he was "at once a pedant and a vaga-

bond, a scholar and a merry-andrew. He translated the penitential psalms and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; he wrote the praises of St Christina and sang the triumphs of Cupid." But there are plenty of parallels for the appearance of such opposites in a single character and history. Marot's was certainly a light nature; he was mercurial, gay, debonair. His verses are of the occasional, trivial order, clever, witty, satirical, such *jeux d'esprit* as a courtier throws off for the amusement of others and the increase of his own reputation as wit and poet. It may seem one of the strangest of ironies that it should have fallen to a man of this stamp to lay the basis of the praise-book of that Church, above all others, of whose rigorous severity, alike in faith and morals, Calvin presents the type. Yet it is not inexplicable. In so light a nature the rootage of religion might not be deep and yet be very real. Marot would not have risked so much as he did by his biting ridicule of the monks and his satires on church abuses, nor would he have borne as he did the hardships of repeated exile for his faith, if he had not been sincere. Nor would he have exercised his poetic gifts on the grave matter of the psalms. But he did; and his first translations, circulated in manuscript, created a sensation. They became the fashion of the hour; soon all the Court was singing them.

Some of them came into Calvin's hands while he was engaged in such work himself. He at once saw that they possessed a lyric grace to which his own versions were strangers. He had the good sense to cease his own efforts, and though in his first Psalter, issued at Strasburg, along with eight of Marot's versions he included five of his own, he used the latter only because Marot could then supply him with no equivalents, and, later, he withdrew them. In 1543, at Geneva, Marot's *Fifty Psalms* were published.

Théodore de Bèze (Beza) (1519-1605), at Calvin's request, versified the remaining hundred. This was a man of a quality far different from Marot. In youth he also had written verses which he came bitterly to regret, but he had no lyric gift. His versifications are stodgy and graceless, and not seldom vulgar. In other directions he was a man of weight and power. He became Calvin's colleague in the chair of theology in Geneva, then first rector of the college there, and after Calvin's death was the foremost figure in Geneva, alike in Church and State.

2. **The Music.**—Calvin himself was no musician, but he was alive to the power of music to move the heart, and, especially after his experience in Strasburg, to its value as an aid in public worship. The Zwinglian inclination to exile music from the Church and substitute a kind of responsive recitative made worship too bald for him. Not that æsthetic considerations had any weight with him, for he resented the intrusion of anything formal or artistic as being offensive to God. Instrumental aids he would not tolerate; they had been permitted in the Jewish Church only because the people were children, allowed to use childish toys. Nor would he consent to the introduction of part-singing, because the interest of it might distract attention from the spiritual intention of what was being sung. But he believed in the people singing, and about the kind of tunes they should be asked to sing he was very deeply concerned. In the Roman Church secular songs of the most profane kind were introduced even into the service of the Mass, and the authorities seemed powerless to stop the abuse. The tunes, also, to which Marot's psalms were already being sung scandalised his rigorous sense of what was befitting for the worship of God. In the lack of anything better ballad airs had been called into use. Diane de Poitiers

favourite among the psalm-versions was the 130th; she sang that penitential psalm to the air of a popular jig, and the other members of the dissolute Court had each their favourites, which were trolled to airs equally jolly. This fashion proved infectious, and at the very outset of its use the new psalmody needed to be redeemed from the musical degradation to which it was being subjected.

In Strasburg Calvin had been impressed by the dignity and strength of some of the German melodies and of others composed by two ex-monks and choristers of the cathedral, **Wolfgang Dachstein** and **Matthäus Greiter**, who had embraced the reformed faith. The latter was afterwards to recant and return to the unreformed fold, but first he wrote, among other tunes, the magnificent Psalm lxviii. (217) which was to become the *Psaume de Batailles*, the Marseillaise of the Huguenot Reformation. Tunes of that grave and noble type were what Calvin saw to be needed. To procure them he took the right course. He brought from Paris a musician of rare capacity and distinction, **Louis Bourgeois** by name (1510-?). Him the Consistory instructed to prepare music for the new use, the one requirement laid down being that "it should be simple, to carry weight and majesty suitable to the subject, and to be fit to be sung in church." Bourgeois found a psalter with thirty tunes; he left one with eighty-five. He had difficult masters to serve. On one occasion they threw him into prison for making some alteration, afterwards approved, in some of the Strasburg melodies. But he served them magnificently. He organised musical education, training the students and the children, so that by their singing their elders might be instructed. And he wrote glorious tunes. Eleven of them appear in the *Hymnary*. Some of them, like Luther's, were adaptations of popular airs, "purified

and baptised into Christian seriousness." Many of the best of them—no one can say which—were his own. Harmonised editions were issued from the first, but were excluded from use in public worship. His efforts to be allowed to introduce part-singing into church were steadily negatived, and at last, in disgust, he left the city.

Claude Goudimel also deserves honour in connection with the Genevan psalmody, not as a writer of original tunes but as harmoniser of those that were in use, in contrapuntal style. He was one of the greatest of sixteenth-century tonemasters. For long it was believed that he had been Palestrina's teacher, but that attractive legend is now discredited. He wrote much for the Roman Church, and secular music besides, before the reformed faith attracted him. His adhesion to the Huguenot cause cost him his life. When the massacre of St Bartholomew took place in 1572 he was one of the victims. He was beheaded in the streets of Lyons, after brutal treatment, and his body thrown into the Rhone.

The Popularity of the Psalms to the new tunes was very great. A visitor to Geneva in 1557 has left an account of what he found there. "A most interesting sight is offered in the city on the week-days, when the hour for the sermon approaches. As soon as the first sound of the bell is heard, all shops are closed, all conversation ceases, all business is broken off, and from all sides the people hasten to the nearest meeting-house. There each one draws from his pocket a small book which contains the psalms with notes, and out of full hearts, in the native speech, the congregation sings before and after the sermon. Every one testifies to me how great consolation and edification is derived from this custom." At first the Catholics had had no scruple about singing the new psalms, but the Sorbonne interposed its veto,

and soon psalm-singing became the badge of adherence to the Reformation. Among the Huguenots it was universal; indeed a contemporary writer dates the foundation of the Huguenot Church by the introduction of this practice. All that is most splendid and moving in the history of that Church has some association with the psalms. Its soldiers sang them on the battlefield, its martyrs in the flames. Many of them are fragrant with heroic memories.

Let but one such memory be recalled, as Lord Ernle records it in his *Psalms in Human Life*: "In 1589 Henry gained another victory under the walls of the Chateau d'Arques, the picturesque ruins of which are still standing in the neighbourhood of Dieppe. There the King and his Huguenot followers were threatened with destruction by the Duc de Mayenne and the army of the League. His forces were but few compared with the number of those arrayed against them; his reinforcements had failed him; the courage of his men was crushed by the weight of superior numbers. 'Come, M. le Ministre,' cried the King to Pasteur Damour, 'lift the psalm. It is full time.' Then, above the din of the marching armies, rose the austere melody of the 68th Psalm (217), set to the words of Beza, *Que Dieu se montre seulement*, and swinging with the march of the Huguenot companies. Pressing onwards, the men of Dieppe forced themselves like an iron wedge through the lines of the League, and split them asunder. The sea-fog cleared away; Henry's artillerymen in the Castle could see to take aim; the roll of cannon marked the time of the psalm; and the Leaguers were scattered."

The popularity of the psalms extended to other lands. Ambrosius Lobwasser translated them into German, thus providing the Reformed Church in Germany and in German Switzerland with its authoritative Psalter. They were

translated also into Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Bohemian, Polish, Latin, and even Hebrew, and they exercised a powerful influence on the shaping of the metrical Psalters of England and Scotland, which we now proceed to consider.

XIII

THE BATTLE OF THE PSALTERS IN ENGLAND

AMONG those who came under the influence of the religious quickening in England in the mid-sixteenth century was a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber of King Henry VIII., **Thomas Sternhold** (1500–49) by name. The profane and obscene songs his fellow-courtiers were accustomed to sing were an acute grief to his sensitive soul, and he knew that among the people also ballads with the same taint were very much in use. Could nothing be done, he asked himself, to turn their minds away from such defiling ribaldry? Possibly, if the psalms could be turned into metre in the popular ballad measure, so that they might be sung to the well-known melodies which gave the ballads half their charm, the singers might be induced to sing them instead. He determined to make the experiment. The measure he adopted was that of *Chevy Chase*. In words and music alike he had to aim at the popular mark. Polished verse would have been useless; fine poetry would simply have been ignored. The crudity of his versification has this fact for an extenuation. The poetical standard then was far from high, and his only chance of getting his verses sung depended on his giving them something of the simple, captivating, memorable quality that made the ballads popular. In that humble aim he succeeded: his verse comes quite creditably out of a comparison with that of the balladry of the time.

Sternhold and Hopkins.—One day, as he was sitting

at the organ in his chambers in Whitehall, singing over some of his versions for his own solace, a delicate-looking lad stole quietly into the room, and listened with delight. Such singing of sacred words in the common tongue he had never heard before. Within a few years this lad was on the throne as King Edward VI. And so, when Sternhold, in 1549, published thirty-seven of his translations, to whom should he dedicate them but to the King whom they had so singularly moved? And in his dedication what better could he say than this? "Trusting that as your Grace taketh pleasure to hear them song sometimes of me, so ye will also delight not only to see and read therein yourself, but also to commande them to be song to you of all others, Thomas Sternhold, grome of His Maiesties Robes, wisheth encrease of health, honore, and felicitie." Within a few months Sternhold was dead. But his friend **John Hopkins** (*d.* 1570), a clergyman and schoolmaster in Suffolk, took up the task, and contributed sixty versions to the work before it was complete.

The Anglo-Genevan Psalters.—But at least ten other hands were to contribute a share in the versification before this first metrical Psalter should be complete, and the scene of the next act in the process was not England, but Switzerland. During the persecutions under Queen Mary, many of the leaders of the Reformation took refuge in Geneva. There, in 1556, a collection of *One and Fiftie Psalmes of Dawid in Englishe metre* was published, containing the forty-four versions of Sternhold and Hopkins then available, but with seven others and a metrical rendering of the Ten Commandments added. These were all by **William Whittingham**, brother-in-law of Calvin, who was to become Dean of Durham, but at that time was minister of the congregation of English-speaking refugees in Geneva. The second version of the 124th

Psalm, "Now Israel may say," practically in its present form, was the work of Whittingham. The next edition, appearing in 1558, was distinguished by the fact that it contained twenty-four versions by **William Kethe**, among them the world-famous version of the 100th Psalm (229), which, however, was at that time curiously ascribed to Sternhold.

Much interest attaches to the 1556 edition of this Anglo-Genevan Psalter, for the reason that it contained the first instalment of those well-known church-tunes (e.g. 486, 530, 643) which have ever since had a measure of use in this country. They are plainly modelled on Bourgeois' tunes in the Marot-Beza Psalter; but no one knows who composed them. Among those who threw themselves whole-heartedly into the cause of the Reformation were many musicians of mark, like **Christopher Tye** (166, 528) and **John Merbecke** (713, etc.), organists and singers from the cathedrals and chapels royal; and doubtless some of these, of unknown name, were among the exiles. Only some such skilled hands could have given us these strong and massive tunes.

When the exiles returned to this country after the death of Mary, they brought the psalm-singing practice with them. Strype, in his *Annals*, says that it spread like wildfire, and that churches vied with one another in it. He describes a scene—an early example of community-singing—in London, in the days of Elizabeth. "You may now sometimes see at St Paul's Cross, after the service, six thousand persons, young and old, of all sexes, singing together; this sadly annoys the mass priests, for they perceive that by this means the sacred discourse sinks more deeply into the minds of men." By and by, psalm-singer became another name for Protestant.

The Old Version.—The complete metrical Psalter, known as the Old Version, but more popularly as

"Sternhold and Hopkins," was published in 1562 by John Day, who had himself been an exile for the faith, and was licensed for use in public worship. It was bound up with the Bible, and continued to be printed as the authorised version until the second decade of the nineteenth century.

The Puritan Versions.—To the Puritans the singing of the psalms was the most sacred act of public worship. They might keep their hats on during the reading of the lessons, but they scrupulously bared their heads while the psalms were being sung. It was a matter of moment to them therefore that the version used should be as good as possible. When the Westminster Assembly of Divines set itself the impossible task of trying to devise a basis for uniformity of Church organisation, belief and worship throughout the kingdom, two rival versions competed for support. **Francis Rous**, M.P. for Truro in the Long Parliament, a member of the Westminster Assembly, and, under the Commonwealth, Provost of Eton College, had published a version of his own in 1641. This, after a great deal of amendment, the House of Commons, in 1646, ordered—it "and none other"—to be used in all churches and chapels within the kingdom. The House of Lords, however, disagreed, favouring the rival version of **William Barton**, a very pushful and zealous minister at Leicester. Thus a deadlock was created. The Divines and the Commons refused to countenance Barton; the Lords sat still and withheld their sanction from Rous. The latter version, therefore, though adopted in Scotland, had short shrift in the country of its origin.

The New Version.—Many other attempts were made to produce a satisfactory version, but none conciliated any general degree of favour until two Irishmen, **Nahum Tate** and **Dr Nicholas Brady**, published in 1696 what

was known as the New Version, or, popularly, "Tate and Brady." Sanction was given for its use in churches, and also for a Supplement issued in 1703. Fidelity to the original text was not a virtue of this version. The aim of the writers was rather at literary smoothness and finish; they justly felt that the verse-medium should be made as poetical as possible in justice to the substance of the psalms. Undoubtedly they achieved a measure of success. Their versions of Psalms xxxiv. and xlii. ("Through all the changing scenes of life" and "As pants the hart for water-brooks") still appear in many hymnals, and Paraphrase xxxvii., Tate's most successful effort, appears in the *Hymnary* (42), and is in quite general use. But they abandoned the Reformation principle of adhering closely to the letter of Scripture, in favour of a rhetorical paraphrase which was much more in the nature of a hymn. In some of the more ornate versions the hand of Tate's patron Dryden has been suspected. Much of the ruggedness of the old version certainly disappears, but the new smoothness produces an effect of tameness; many of the new versions are spiritless in the extreme. The significance of this venture for us, however, lies in the claim of the writers to the right of using their material with more lyrical freedom than the old psalmody allowed; in this respect it marked a decided step forward on the road to the introduction of hymns.

The Reception of the New Version was in many quarters hostile. One of the bishops assailed it as "fine and modish . . . gay and fashionable"; the old version seemed to him superior because its style was "plain and low and heavy, while the other is brisk and lively, and flourished here and there with wit and fancy." Religion, he urged, "is too severe a thing to be played with." In this view he had much popular sympathy. To simple

minds the very elegance of the language Tate and Brady used was an offence. "David speaks so plain," said one old man, "that we cannot mistake his meaning, but as for Mr Tate and Brady, they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." The habitual conservatism and inertia of the average church member opposed a barrier also to any breach with use and wont. Describing the choir at Shepperton, in *Scenes from Clerical Life*, George Eliot says, "The innovation of hymn-books was as yet undreamt of; even the new version was regarded with a sort of melancholy tolerance, as part of the common degeneracy in a time when prices had dwindled, and a cotton gown was no longer stout enough to last a lifetime; for the lyrical taste of the best heads in Shepperton had been formed on Sternhold and Hopkins." Opposition notwithstanding, however, the New Version made its way into use in town and country, became the standard book in use in London, and continued to be used in many places until the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Music of the Psalters.—To begin with, the tunes used with the Old Version were few, but well known. Few people could read, and the custom of "lining out" was adopted. There were no organs except in the cathedrals and larger churches, and the music was therefore exclusively vocal. The people's part, the tune, was set in the tenor. Many music editions appeared—Day's (1563), with simple four-part settings; Este's (1592), in which the naming of tunes after places begins, and the harmonies are by distinguished madrigalists like George Kirbye, John Dowland, Richard Allison, Giles Farnaby and John Farmer; Ravenscroft's (1621), also with harmonies by eminent musicians, among them Milton's father; Playford's (1677), which held the field for a hundred years. Playford is generally blamed for ironing

out the old rhythms of the tunes and giving all the notes an equal value ; but the practice was not new, and was probably imposed by the slovenly way in which congregations sang them.

The New Version brought many fine new tunes into the field, such as Croft's " St Anne," " Hanover," and " St Matthew"; Jeremiah Clark's " St Magnus"; Miller's " Rockingham " (Communion); Weale's " Bedford." But the condition of congregational psalmody deteriorated steadily. The Reformation had done grave injury to church music. In Elizabeth's reign every educated man was able to take his part and sing at sight ; in family circles even the servant girls could join in singing the madrigals. But Edward VI. had destroyed the chantries of the cathedrals, and with them the song schools, and musical education thereafter rapidly declined. There was a measure of recovery in the early seventeenth century ; then Puritanism dealt it a yet more deadly blow. Organs were destroyed, music libraries burned, choirs disbanded, so that when the reconstruction began, church music had to be built up afresh from the very foundations.

The practice of " lining " and the slow *tempo* which was universal made good congregational singing impossible. When organs began to be heard again the practice grew up of interjecting organ interludes between the lines, often with no relation to the tune, for examples exist which show that " the composer had set himself to deck out the psalm tune with some of the lively movement of the music of the day." At the beginning of the eighteenth century in some districts church music was unknown ; the singing of psalms was forgotten. In some places only one tune was known ; one writer of the mid-eighteenth century says he has known " York " tune to be sung fifteen times in one week at one church. Yet to get people to learn new tunes was almost impossible.

Dr Burney says that "the only two tunes that have been so honoured as to be adopted and used throughout the kingdom within the last hundred years are perhaps those of the 104th Psalm ('Hanover') and the Easter Hymn" (119). A few years later another writer says, "In some churches one may see the parish clerk (precentor) after giving out a couple of staves from Sternhold and Hopkins, with two or three other poor wights, drawling them out in the most lamentable strains, with such grimace, and in such discordant notes, as must shock every serious person, and afford mirth to the undevout." The Old Psalmody, clearly, had fully outlived its day and was in need of drastic reform.

XIV

THE METRICAL PSALTERS OF SCOTLAND

ABOUT the year 1546, the year in which Cardinal Beaton was murdered at St Andrews, there appeared a remarkable little book entitled *Ane Compendious Buik of Godlie Psalmes and Spirituall Sangis*, but better known by the briefer name of *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis*, which leapt into immediate favour in Scotland among the middle and trading classes. The authors were three brothers, Wedderburn by name, doughty Dundee men, one of whom studied at Wittenberg under Luther and Melanchthon, and all of whom were ardent and fearless supporters of the Reformation. It contained daring and amusing satires, spiritual meditations, versions of twenty-two psalms, and translations into homely and racy Scots of several of Luther's and other Reformation hymns. These were sung to well-known secular tunes, and for long retained their living hold on the people. It looked for a time indeed as if the Lutheran model of hymnody would become the accepted form of the new church praise of Scotland. But the influence of Knox arrested that tendency, and induced Scotland to resort rather to the Genevan fountainhead.

The First Psalter.—Knox was minister to the congregation of English-speaking refugees in Geneva for two years. When he returned to Scotland in 1559, he brought with him the *Anglo-Genevan Psalter*. While agreeing to make this the basis of a Psalter for their own use, however, the Scots, with characteristic independence,

resolved first to revise it thoroughly. Among those entrusted with this task were two remarkable men—Robert Pont, who was simultaneously minister of St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, and a senator of the College of Justice; and John Craig, who had begun by being a Dominican monk but had been converted to Protestantism by reading Calvin's *Institutes*, and who, after a career of great variety and romance on the Continent, returned to be colleague to Knox. To Craig we owe the second versions of Psalms cxliii. and cxlv. in the Scottish Psalter.

The Church was extremely poor, but it contrived to advance to the publisher, Robert Lekprevik, Edinburgh, a sum of "twa hundreth pundis to help to buy irons, ink, and paper, and to fie craftsmen for printing." Thus it was made possible to issue the new version, as part of *The Book of Common Order*, in 1564. It remained the authorised Scottish Psalter until 1650. It contained a much greater variety of metre than the English Psalter or the one now used in Scotland; there were twenty-seven different varieties of peculiar metre, mainly in imitation of the measures of the French Psalter, in order to make it possible to use many of the French tunes. An edition issued in 1595 was distinguished by two unusual features. To every psalm was appended a prayer, suggested by the dominant thought of the psalm. And there was also a set of thirty-two "Conclusions," or metrical versions of the *Gloria Patri* (712), in a sufficient variety of metres to make it possible to have one sung at the close of every psalm-portion. In 1638 Baillie speaks of the singing of the *Gloria* as "the constant practice of our Church," and he and others were strongly opposed to abandoning it. But like other seemly practices, like the use of the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, this custom was given up in deference to the prejudices of the fanatical Puritans in the Westminster Assembly.

The Present Version.—The need for a more modern version became evident early in the seventeenth century. The union of the Crowns had taken place ; there had been great changes in the language, and the appearance of the Authorised Version of the Bible in 1611 had so set the standard of religious diction that a new version of the psalms must soon, in any case, have become a necessity. King James I. had the hardihood to attempt to furnish one, and translated thirty-one psalms as a beginning. Sir William Alexander, afterwards Earl of Stirling, rewrote these and versified the rest. With more filial piety than prudence, Charles I. attempted to force the use of this Psalter which bore his father's name, upon the Scottish people. He had it bound up with Laud's Liturgy, and by royal mandate required it to be brought into use on July 23, 1637. Jenny Geddes gave him his answer. Her famous exploit on that day in St Giles was the first blow in a struggle which cost Charles his kingdom and his head.

When the Westminster Assembly of Divines convened in 1643, to find a basis for uniformity of creed, polity and worship throughout the kingdom, the Commissioners who represented Scotland were all notable men—Alexander Henderson, a great ecclesiastical statesman ; the saintly Samuel Rutherford ; stout-hearted Sir Archibald Johnston, afterwards Lord Warriston, and, later still, a martyr for the Covenant ; “ the noble youth ” George Gillespie, moderator of the General Assembly at the age of thirty-five ; the learned Robert Baillie, to whose *Letters and Memorials* we owe much of our knowledge of those times ; and the scoundrel John Maitland, who, beginning as “ a high-flying Covenanter,” changed sides, and was rewarded by the dukedom of Lauderdale, paying for the honour “ by becoming a ruffian ” and “ a mocker at all sacred things.” One of the tasks of the Assembly

was to agree upon a common book of praise. The Scots Commissioners loyally implemented the decision, referred to in last chapter, to recommend the adoption of Rous's version. Again, however, as in 1559, the Scots asserted their right to revise and amend. This was done with great care, and the Metrical Psalter as we now have it was in 1650 finally approved and authorised for use. Rous's name was nowhere mentioned in connection with it. His version furnished the basis of it, but he would have had difficulty in identifying in it his own handiwork; in the 23rd Psalm, for example, only two and a half lines of his version are used, though the whole psalm is loosely credited to him.

The Psalter as we have it has been abundantly criticised. But the version has solid merits. It adheres closely to the original text throughout; no other does so more closely. And its very lack of the smoother graces is a count in its favour. So eminent an authority as Professor Robertson Smith held that "as the Old Testament Church left for our guidance a perfect model of a childlike faith and devotion . . . it is essential that this model should be kept in all its simplicity. Every artificial touch, every trace of modern taste, must be avoided. . . . A translation of the psalms for devotional use must be, above all things, simple, even naïve. This great requisite our Scottish version has fully realised, and to have done so is a merit that outweighs a hundred faults." In the portions that are most suitable for modern worship there is a rugged strength, an elevation and dignity, which make these passages incomparable for congregational use. So long as there are Scots folk to sing them, these psalms, so interwoven with their history and interfused with their very blood, will always hold the first place in their national worship-song.

The Music of the Psalters.—The Assembly of 1560

was careful to provide for the music of the Psalter to which it set its seal. The tunes were fixed, each being printed in the tenor clef at the conclusion of the psalm to which it belonged. No harmonies were given, in accordance with the Genevan precedent; unison singing being what the Reformers desired. In 1635, however, a harmonised edition was issued. It is of the highest interest. The musical editor was one Edward Millar, but he called to his aid, he says, "the primest musicians that ever this kingdom had." These harmonies, like the purely Scots tunes of the period, show that Scotland was not so far as is commonly supposed behind other countries then in the possession of musicians of ability and culture.

The tunes are syllabic, one note to each syllable of the words. Considerable use is made of modes now obsolete. A number of the tunes are from the French Psalter; others, like "Dundee," are from England; others are Scottish. Of the thirty-one "common" tunes, which may be used with any psalm they suit, the following are still in use, and all, with the exception of "York" and "Melrose," are in the Revised *Hymnary*: "Caithness," "Durham," "Elgin," "Culross," "Martyrs," "Wigton," "Winchester," "Newtoun (New London)," "Cheshire," "Abbey," "Dundee," "Dunfermline," "The Stilt (York)," and "French." It was tunes of this grave and devout type which the Covenanters sang. A moment's consideration of them will show how inconceivable it is that the tune now called "Covenanters" either could or would have been sung by the people whose name it bears. No one could be deceived by it who knows anything of the spirit of those singers or the only music they knew. The tune in question is not Scottish, but American; not old, but outrageously modern; not a psalm-tune, but a caricature of a hymn-tune, written to furnish a fitting melody for a doggerel camp-meeting song.

Measures were taken to encourage and foster congregational singing. Poor though the country was, a sufficient number of Psalters was provided in the churches, and "sang-schules" were established, so that all might learn the tunes. The leader was styled "the Uptaker of the Psalme," and "the maister of the sang-schule and his bairns" constituted the choir. How well these schools did their work may be judged from the fact that when John Durie, a redoubtable exiled minister, returned from banishment, as he and those with him passed through the Netherbow Port in Edinburgh on their way to St Giles, "a grait concours of the haill town met them and took up the 124th Psalm, 'Now Israel may say,' and sang in such a pleasant tune *in four parts*, known to the most part of the people, coming up the street all bare-headed till they entered in the Kirk, with such a great sound and majestie, that it moved both themselves and all the huge multitude of beholders with admiration and astonishment." This is a striking fact, that a promiscuous Scottish crowd, so long ago, could join easily and freely in singing from memory a whole psalm in counterpoint of four parts.

Unhappily, when the Assembly of 1650 "dischargit" the old Psalter, no care was taken to provide music with the new one. For thirty years thereafter the country was ravaged by persecutions. Then, when peace came, the blight of moderatism fell. Under these conditions most of the old tunes were forgotten. When Burns, in *The Cottar's Saturday Night*, extols "Dundee's wild warbling measure, plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name, noble Elgin, the sweetest far of Scotia's lays," and leaves us marvelling at his praise of tunes which to us seem irredeemably dull, it is to be remembered that the number of tunes in use in the churches then was narrowly limited. In the Highlands only five were used—"French," "Martyrs,"

“York,” “Dundee,” and “Elgin”; and in other parts of the country the number fell to ten or twelve. These came to be regarded as not less sacred and inviolate than the psalms themselves. When a demonstration of the singing of some unfamiliar tunes was given in Aberdeen in 1755, the Kirk Session met in indignation and enjoined the precentors “to sing only, in all time coming, the twelve church tunes commonly sung in Scotland.” To such a pass did the church-song of Scotland sink. Here was an urgent need for a thorough-going reform.

When **the revival of Psalmody** did come, it took for a time a wrong direction. Musical education was at a low ebb, and taste was far from high. A new type of tune came therefore into vogue which had little to commend it except that people liked it. It was the Methodist revival that gave it birth. **J. F. Lampe** (225), whom Charles Wesley converted from Deism, and who was latterly an instrumentalist in the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, was one of its representative composers. The new tunes were florid in a high degree, fuguing adorned richly with runs and slurs and repetitions. “Helmsley” (160) is one of the better examples of the florid tune, and “Miles Lane” (139) of the “repeater.” Wesley himself disliked the innovation. It is recorded—though the authenticity of the record is open to some doubt—that on one occasion, in Bristol, he rushed into a room where a choir was practising, and said indignantly, “Let me have no more of your Lancashire hornpipes here.” Some of these tunes were frank adaptations of contemporary instrumental music and popular melodies. But whatever purists might think of them—and William Riley, of the Asylum for Female Orphans, a fine organist and a vigorous writer, protested vehemently against such a “profane method of singing”—they were endlessly popular.

Inevitably they came over the Border and set a bad

example, which was enthusiastically followed. Tunes like "Violet Grove," "Desert," "Job," and many more, put the simple, strong, old psalm-tunes in the shade. There arose also a cult of psalm-tune composing which ran great lengths. Magazines and tune-books of the first half of last century preserve many curious examples. Amateurs thought that whatever else they might be disqualified for, they could at any rate write a perfectly good psalm-tune, many of them taking much the same estimate of their handiwork as one man took of his, when, producing a tune of his own, he said of it, in modest deprecation of a too generous view of it, "It may not be very good, but at any rate it is a good deal better than 'Tallis.'" A collection of a number of these tunes, which our grandfathers and great-grandfathers loved to sing, has in our own time revived a fleeting interest in them. They are not really *old* Scottish psalm-tunes; some are not psalm-tunes at all. The sentiment which invests them with half their interest would be considerably reduced if it were remembered that they belong to a transition time when a debased ideal was dominant. After their brief period of resurrected life it would be well to let them sink quietly into the oblivion from which they have been brought back to us, and to remember that the true "Old Scots Psalm Tunes" are the strong, simple, dignified tunes from the old Scots Psalters, and that these and others of the same spirit and model furnish the proper medium for the expression of the sentiment of the old metrical psalms.

XV

HOW THE PSALTERS LED THE WAY TO PARAPHRASES AND HYMNS

WHILE the introduction of metrical psalmody was hailed with acclamation, it was impossible that its exclusive use should for long go without challenge. Dissatisfaction with it was not slow to become articulate, and cogent reasons for the distaste were not difficult to find.

Why Metrical Psalmody failed to satisfy.—*The literary form* exposed the metrical version to sharp criticism. If literary taste was not high when Sternhold began his work, it had risen greatly by the time the process of versification was complete; the country was then moving rapidly into one of the most brilliant periods of its literary history. Upon increasing numbers of cultured and sensitive minds, therefore, the commonplace prose, cut often into awkward lengths, which constituted a great part of the Sternhold and Hopkins version, must have grated cruelly. Inevitably the demand arose for greater beauty of form in the only material of praise Christian people were permitted to use. But such a demand was more easily made than satisfied. There was no lack of volunteers to essay the difficult task, but few of them evinced either the poetic faculty or even the skill of craftsmanship that was needed to justify the venture. Some true poets there were, indeed, among the experimenters. Sir Philip Sidney, and even more his sister the Countess of Pembroke, on whom Ben Jonson wrote a famous epitaph, George Wither and

George Sandys, each achieved a measure of success ; the second version of the 148th Psalm in the Scottish Psalter shows Wither's powers at their best. But not the most skilful of these efforts won any wide approval, the truth being that not the most finished artistry could make of such a method of treating the psalms a satisfying literary success.

The substance of many of the psalms also was bound to dissatisfy. No one can deny that there is a good deal in them which no Christian should be asked to sing. In substance and spirit they are sometimes irreconcilable with the Gospel—in the imprecatory psalms, for example—and these no power on earth can Christianise. There are portions so steeped in local and temporary associations that their language sounds unnatural on modern lips. Some of those portions which are best loved in present-day worship win much of their power to satisfy us from the fact that unconsciously we put a Christian content into them. We have grown so accustomed to Christianising them silently in our minds that we forget that their categories of thought are really Jewish-theistic and not Christian. This would have thrust itself upon the attention had not the use of the word “ Lord ” as the common equivalent of “ Jehovah ” concealed the fact that those who use only the psalms in their praise cannot use the name of Christ at all in their worship-song. And the sovereign facts of the Christian revelation, and those of the new spiritual experience of the Christian soul, can find no expression in them. The moment such things come to be realised, the restriction of Christian song to the Psalter must be felt to be intolerable.

Among those who were exercised by such considerations some came to the conclusion that the solution was to Christianise the psalms. The first to strike out on this bold line was **Dr John Patrick**, preacher to the Charter-

house, London. In 1679 he published *A Century of Select Psalms and Portions of the Psalms of David, especially all those of Praise*. These were paraphrases rather than translations, but the reason why they gave many people, as Watts said, "a Relish of pious Pleasure" was "that he hath made use of the present language of Christianity in several Psalms, and left out many Judaisms." "I considered," Patrick said, "and pitched upon those Psalms or portions of them which were most proper and of most general use to us as Christians. . . . But I balked those whose whole aspect was upon David's personal troubles, or Israel's particular condition, or related to the Jewish and legal economy . . . or where they express a temper not so suitable to the mild and gentle spirit of the Gospel, such as our Saviour repressed in His disciples, not allowing imprecations of vengeance against our enemies, but rather praying for them." The Psalter which Patrick prepared on these lines was completed in 1692. His brother, Bishop Simon Patrick of Ely, himself a hymn-writer, introduced it into family worship in his own house. Observing that during the singing one of the servant maids kept ostentatious silence, he asked whether she was ailing. "I am well enough in health," she answered, "but if you must needs know the plain truth of the matter, as long as you sung Jesus Christ's Psalms, I sang along with ye; but now you sing Psalms of your own invention, you may sing by yourselves." This version came into use in many, chiefly nonconformist, churches, but it had no chance of general acceptance. Its chief significance is in the fact that it gave Dr Watts an example to follow and an idea to improve upon, at a time when the need had grown clearer for amplifying the resources the Church had in the Psalter, by adding to them a provision of Christian hymns.

The principle of the metrical paraphrase, if it were

admissible in the treatment of the psalms, must sooner or later assert its claim to be extended to other portions of Scripture. Why not versify, for example, the Evangelical Canticles, and other lyrical passages of the Bible which almost invite themselves to be sung? Such an extension of the principle had already been conceded. Calvin himself had included in the Genevan Psalter paraphrases of the Ten Commandments and the *Nunc Dimittis*. The English Psalters had all contained an appendix which formed the nucleus of a hymn-book. The Scottish Psalter of 1575 had an appendix of four such hymns; the edition of 1595 contained ten, and that of 1635 thirteen. How then did it come about that the subsequent prejudice against any paraphrases other than those of the psalms developed in such strength?

The Scottish Paraphrases.—Whether these supplemental paraphrases were ever used in public worship, or were intended only for private meditation and devotion, is now uncertain; but when the present Psalter of 1650 was issued, they disappeared altogether. This was by no means of set purpose. The Assembly of 1647, which gave instructions for the revision of Rous' Psalter, recommended also that Zachary Boyd should "be at the pains to translate the other Scripturall Songs in meeter, and to report his travels also to the Committee of Assembly" with a view to the consideration of his work by Presbyteries in the following year. This plan, however, came to nothing, probably because Boyd's verse was utterly hopeless doggerel. Other efforts fared no better, and interest in the matter ceased. For nearly a century the place of the early paraphrases was not filled, so that when the question was raised again, a generation had arisen which knew nothing about its antecedents, and the proposal appeared so entire an innovation that the atmosphere in which it was launched was far from

friendly. In 1741, however, a committee was appointed to take action. Three years later it was ready with a selection of forty-five versions of portions of Holy Scripture, and these were ordered by the Assembly to be sent down to Presbyteries for their consideration and opinion. In that very month, however, Prince Charlie landed at Morar, and, in the high excitements that followed, interest in the little book was pardonably scanty; and very likely such interest as there was did not encourage any attempt to push the matter further, for thirty years more elapsed before it was raised again. Then, however, action was taken to some purpose. A strong committee of Assembly was appointed; in 1777 it was strengthened further, and in 1781 the now familiar *Translations and Paraphrases, in Verse, of Several Passages of Sacred Scripture*, containing the forty-five paraphrases of the 1745 edition, albeit much revised, along with twenty-two new ones, with five hymns appended of which no explanation was given, came before the Assembly. They were never formally authorised, but the Assembly allowed temporary use of them, pending a final decision, in congregations where the minister might find it for edification. The final decision was never given, but with tacit consent the custom arose of printing the paraphrases along with the metrical psalms, and so they passed into use.

Some of the Paraphrasts.—The Committee which brought them into their final shape contained some very interesting men. One was Dr Thomas Blacklock, a blind minister who had then a considerable reputation as poet and critic, but whose title to remembrance rests on the encouragement he gave to Burns at a critical juncture in his career. Burns was under a heavy cloud and had made up his mind to emigrate to the West Indies, when Dr Lawrie of Monkton handed him a letter from Blacklock

so generously appreciative of the Kilmarnock *Poems*, which had just been published, that Burns repaired to Edinburgh to see his friendly critic, and received so much more encouragement that the project of leaving the country was definitely laid aside. There was Dr Hugh Blair, once famous as a preacher and as Professor of Rhetoric in the University of Edinburgh. There was **Dr John Morison**, whose lot was cast in the wind-swept parish of Canisbay in which John o' Groat's House stands, and of whose boundless geniality and power of eloquent extempore speech traditions still linger there. Seven of his pieces were accepted, and when we note that among these were four of the best-loved of all—"The race that long in darkness pined" (57), "Thus speaks the high and lofty one," "Come, let us to the Lord our God," (400), and, above all, "'Twas on that night when doomed to know" (312)—his title to grateful remembrance will be admitted. Two leading "moderates" were there—"Jupiter" Carlyle, minister of Inveresk, according to Lord Cockburn "one of the noblest-looking old gentlemen I almost ever beheld," and, according to Sir Walter Scott, "the grandest demigod I ever saw" ("and a shrewd, clever old carle was he, no doubt, but no more a poet than his precentor"); and Principal Robertson the historian, whose keen face, with its vivacious eye and jutting chin, looks pleasantly out at us from Raeburn's portrait. And **John Logan** was of the company, that enigmatic figure, of whose signal ability and lyrical faculty and even devotional feeling there are undeniable proofs—as in Paraphrase liii., and his improvements on Doddridge's original of the second paraphrase (562); but of whose moral obliquity there are many proofs equally clear. In the vexed question which of the paraphrases claimed by him were really the work of his unhappy and shamefully betrayed friend Michael Bruce, it is difficult

now to cast the balance of evidence justly ; but if Logan receives much less than his due of credit, he has nothing but his own acts and reputation to thank for it. He was misled by inordinate ambition into the errors that cloud his name. **William Cameron** must not be forgotten. He was but a probationer when, though not a member of the Committee, the real editorship of the collection was entrusted to him. He justified the choice, for his touch was almost unerring in its felicitousness ; his alterations were almost invariably for the better. Paraphrase lxvi. (223) owes to him the refining of Watts's original rough ore, which made it the fine gold which we know. Paraphrase lxi. (137) is partly his work also.

The Committee allowed itself liberties in revision and alteration which would incur universal condemnation were any editor to use similar powers to-day. It did not matter who the original author was—Watts, Doddridge, Tate, who else ?—the editorial prerogative was remorselessly applied. A study of the processes of change as they are exhibited in Maclagan's book on the subject is full of interest. In the end, in some instances, the original author would recognise only fragments of his own work, but he would admit the finished product to be much superior to it.

The reception of the Paraphrases was mixed. In some quarters the fact that the Moderate party in the Church were influentially represented on the Committee caused the prejudiced and unjust suggestion that they were deficient in the evangelical note. In others the prejudice against anything but the psalms being sung proved invincible ; in certain of the smaller Scottish Presbyterian Churches not a paraphrase is permitted to this day. The dislike of them was sometimes so strong that they were torn out of the Bible, or the leaves on which they were printed were immovably gummed

together. Irreconcilables often shook from their feet the dust of the church to which they belonged when the obnoxious "hymns of human composure" were introduced. None the less they made their way, and though most of them are now quite obsolete, not a few have found their way as hymns into modern hymn-collections, and a considerable number have an impregnable place in the habitual use and reverent affection of the Scottish people. Thirteen of them appear in the *Hymnary*.

XVI

THE GATHERING STREAM OF ENGLISH HYMNODY

It is a remarkable fact that the country of Spenser and Shakespeare, during the great period of literature with which their names are identified, contributed scarcely anything to hymnody. Lyrical poetry flourished then with abounding luxuriance, but no one thought of attempting to write lyrics for church use. The explanation lies, of course, in the exclusive domination of metrical psalmody. No one as yet even dreamed of challenging that supremacy, or of asking the Church to think of any alternative to it. Over a century had to elapse before the Church was ready to enter the zone of hymnody.

It is true that religious lyrics of great beauty are to be found even in the early part of this period. *The Lamentation of a Sinner* (401), by **John Marckant** (c. 1562), early found its way into the appendix to the Psalter; such lyrics as Ben Jonson's "I sing the birth was born to-night," George Gascoigne's "You that have spent the silent night," and Campion's "Never weather-beaten sail more willing bent to shore," have been impressed into modern hymn-books; and a cento from "Hierusalem, my happie home," by the unidentifiable F. B. P., enriches the *Hymnary* (595). But, the indisputable beauty of these lyrics notwithstanding, it is evident that those who wrote them had no conception of their ever being put to any congregational use. Even to Milton the hymn was never associated with any liturgical purpose; he conceived it only as a religious ode. "Ring out, ye crystal spheres,"

the section of his *Ode on the Nativity* which appears as Hymn 61, shows by its elaborate metre and ornate diction that the possibility of its being sung in church worship was not within the horizon of his mind. Nor had he any such intention even in his translations of the psalms. It is only by a process of liberal omission in one instance (11), and by piecing together fragments of three of his psalm-versions in another (151), that posterity has been able to harness his stately muse to the service of congregational song.

The Pre-Restoration Period.—The first to see the necessity of supplementing the metrical psalms with specifically Christian hymns for congregational use was the industrious, irrepressible, and unfortunate **George Wither** (1588-1667). His *Hymnes and Songs of the Church* (1623) were published in the courageous hope that they would be accepted for church use. In addition to metrical paraphrases of passages of Scripture in the accepted mode, this book included a series of hymns for the festivals, seasons, and holy days of the Prayer Book, hymns for almost every conceivable kind of special occasion, and a long hymn for singing during the administration of the Lord's Supper. Prominent churchmen smiled upon the venture; King James also favoured it, and granted Wither a patent authorising the issue of the collection bound up with the Old Version of the Psalms. But alas! the too eager author had not reckoned with the opposition of vested interests. The Stationers' Company deemed their rights invaded by the patent, boycotted the book, and did not rest until the privilege was withdrawn. Poor impecunious Wither was nearly ruined, and his book sank into oblivion. On the whole, it deserved a better fate. Pope's contemptuous dismissal of its author as "wretched Wither" was grossly unfair. No one can deny the author of "Shall I wasting in despair"

possession of the authentic lyric fire, and though many of his hymns are otiose and dull, some of them possess a melody and a grace which entitled them to attention. But interest turns to the book now, not because of poor Wither's work, but because of a set of tunes printed (melody and bass) at the end. These, the first specific hymn-tunes published in this country, were by the most illustrious musician of that time and one of the greatest musicians of all time in this country, **Orlando Gibbons**. Nine of them are included in the present *Hymnary*. The misadventure which overtook Wither's book probably did no more than hasten its demise, for his venture was premature; the ripe time for the introduction of hymns was still three generations away.

John Cosin (1594-1672) was the first author to see one of his hymns introduced into the Church's use. At the hands of intolerant Puritans Cosin suffered much, but after the Restoration he had his reward in the deanery and then the bishopric of Durham. His splendid version of the Latin hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* (182) was published by him first in *A Collection of Private Devotions in Practice of the Ancient Church* (1627), a book which the pamphleteer William Prynne renamed as "Mr Cozens his Couzening Devotions." He did not mean the hymn to be sung in public, but to be said privately every morning at nine o'clock, in commemoration of the descent of the Holy Spirit. The revisers of the Prayer Book, however, of whom he was one, included it in the Ordination Service. Another writer who evinced the same interest as Cosin in the Latin hymns which Cranmer omitted from the Prayer Book, was **William Drummond of Hawthornden** (1585-1649), who translated twenty of the Office hymns from the Antwerp *Primer or Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (1604). One of these translations appears as Hymn 4.

"Holy" **George Herbert** (1593-1633), who is one of

the glories of the Anglican Church, was no hymn-writer ; no aim to become one ever entered his mind. No man ever had a finer lyrical sense or a more exquisite and finished artistry. Each piece of his workmanship is " finished like a cameo " ; his dexterousness in the craft of verse has been compared with " the sword-play of an alert, well-poised, strong-wristed fencer with the rapier." But many things in his poems—the freakishness of his fancy, the quaintness of his humour, the extravagance of his imagery (Donne was a bad master), as well as the subtlety of his thought and the lack of clearness in the expression of it, show that he never dreamed of his verses being called into public use. " Less than the least of God's mercies " was the motto with which he was wont to conclude anything that might tend to his own honour, and the lowly spirit that made him ask that no word of inscription should mark his tomb would doubtless disclaim our honour now ; but his holy and winsome character makes us welcome him, with his oft-quoted verses on *The Elixir* (511), and his splendid antiphon (15), to a place among those who give the modern Church its song.

Henry Vaughan, the Silurist (a native of South Wales, the country of the ancient Silures), was a spiritual disciple of Herbert and, like him, learned his type of the poetic art in the metaphysical school of Donne. His verse is deeply religious, more weighted with thought and of a profounder spirituality than Herbert's ; it is therefore even more discouragingly obscure ; but the vein of mysticism, the refined feeling and the noble thought, gleam like gold through the dullest of his verses. His *Silex Scintillans* (Sparks from the Flint, 1650), yields us the beautiful " My soul, there is a country " (463).

The Restoration caused a change of atmosphere, in which the fortune of psalmody declined, and the course of hymnody began to be definitely shaped towards public use.

The time was one of the gravest peril for the nation. A deep fissure ran athwart both Church and State, dividing the people into two camps between which community of feeling seemed hopelessly impossible. Yet against that gloomy background some personalities shine out with undimmed lustre.

Thomas Ken (1637-1711) had good right to teach others to sing "Keep conscience as the noontide clear," for his whole life was distinguished by a staunch and sometimes heroic fidelity to principle, which took no account at all of any interest of his own. Charles II. said that he liked to "hear little Ken tell him of his faults," and he gave him the bishopric of Bath and Wells because of one courageous rebuke Ken administered to him. James II. threw him into prison for refusing subservience to his designs for the re-introduction of Romanism, yet rather than take the oath of allegiance to that unworthy king's supplanter, William III., Ken chose to be deprived of his see, because he held himself bound to loyalty to James by the oath he had sworn at the time of his coronation. The tribute Macaulay pays to him is just: "his moral character, when impartially reviewed, sustains a comparison with any in ecclesiastical history, and seems to approach as near as human infirmity permits, to the ideal of Christian virtue." It was while Ken held the living of Brighthelmston (Brixton), Isle of Wight, that he composed his famous morning and evening hymns, also one for midnight which is not in use. They were written first for his own use; he had a beautiful voice, and sang them daily in his own devotions, to the accompaniment of the viol or the spinet. During his residence at Winchester as a Fellow of the College there, he prepared a *Manual of Prayers* for the scholars, in which he says, "Be sure to sing the Morning and Evening Hymn in your chamber devoutly, remembering that the Psalmist, upon happy

experience, assures you that it is a good thing to tell of the loving-kindness of the Lord early in the morning and of His truth in the night season." This implies that the hymns were then available for use. Probably they were printed on leaflets and fastened to the wall of the dormitories beside the boys' beds. Even then, be it noted, they were not intended for congregational worship, but for the boys' private devotions. For such a purpose, what could be more wholesome? They reflect the simple, sincere, and manly piety of one of the best of men.

John Bunyan (1628-88) was of a school as remote as possible from that to which Herbert and Ken belonged. Everyone knows how the tinker-preacher of Bedford, while imprisoned in Bedford Gaol for unlicensed preaching, wrote the autobiography *Grace Abounding* and most of the first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*; *The Holy War* and the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* were written after his release. These works place him among the immortals. His verse is not high poetry, and it suffers in comparison with his incomparable prose, but its rough vigour and sincerity and directness well entitle his hymns (557, 576), though never intended for such a use, to a place in modern hymn-books.

Richard Baxter (1615-91), Presbyterian minister of Kidderminster, is one of the noblest figures in that age. No saner or more saintly spirit appeared amid the violent partisanships and fierce contentions of the time. He incurred the animosity of both sides by his independence and the steadfastness with which he pleaded for the unpopular grace of toleration. His own hymns deserve high honour (39, 225, 549); but for another reason also he has a claim to special mention here. He was one of the first and most convinced advocates of the use of hymns in public worship. He held that hymns had been sung in the Church from the beginning; that "doubtless

Paul meaneth not only David's Psalms, when he bids men sing, with grace in their hearts, Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs; Yea, it is past doubt that Hymns more suitable to Gospel-times may and ought now to be used." It was under his influence that William Barton published his *Centuries of Select Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1670 and later), which came into use in many nonconformist churches. He was a close friend also of John Mason, whose *Spiritual Songs* (1683) had a great circulation, and influenced Watts deeply. Mason's fine hymn "How shall I sing that Majesty which angels do admire?" striking a note which no other hymn quite touches, deserved a place in the *Hymnary*. Baxter's own hymns were definitely intended for congregational singing; the verses are numbered, and references are given to the appropriate psalm-tunes to which they should be sung.

It is a singular fact that Bunyan and Baxter never once mention each other in all their voluminous writings. Whatever the reason was, the misunderstanding which prevented these two rare spirits from appreciating one another has been cleared up, we may be sure, long ago. The equal honour in which their names stand here may be taken as a symbol of their reconciliation.

Joseph Addison (1672-1719) stands beyond the group of preparers of the way with whom this chapter deals; yet in his staid and formal fashion he had part in the same movement. It may seem strange that the wit and essayist, the gentle and polished satirist of contemporary manners, the man of the world and Secretary of State, should stand with the hymn-writers at all. Yet he is by no means out of place in such a company; he was a devout Christian, and John Wesley bears witness that by his exposure of the folly and worse of many of the social customs of the time, he rendered signal service to the kingdom of God. Anything like enthusiasm in religion

was regarded with horror then, and Addison's hymns have the quality of their age in being restrained, cool, never quite warming into life. But there is the note of a genuine piety in them, of the type which Macaulay describes: "The piety of Addison was in truth of a singularly cheerful character. The feeling which predominates in all his devotional writings is gratitude. . . . On that goodness to which he ascribed all the happiness of his life he relied in the hour of his death, with the love which casteth out fear."

By the time Addison's life closed, the long exile of hymnody from the courts of God's House was ending; the gates of praise were opening to receive it to a place of honour in God's service.

XVII

HOW ISAAC WATTS OPENED THE SLUICE-GATES TO LET THE STREAM FLOW FREE

AT the end of the seventeenth century the condition of psalmody was deplorable in the extreme. Watts describes it in the preface to one of his hymns: "To see the dull indifference, the negligent and thoughtless air, that sits upon the faces of the whole assembly while the psalm is on their lips, might tempt even a charitable observer to suspect the fervour of inward religion; and it is much to be feared that the minds of most of the worshippers are absent or unconcerned. . . . That very action which should elevate us to the most delightful and divine sensations, doth not only flatten our devotion, but too often awakes our regret, and touches all the springs of uneasiness within us." Yet the obstacle to improvement was the dull determination of the very people whose attitude is thus described, to allow no innovation to disturb this unhappy use and wont. Something like a miracle was needed to produce a favouring change in the general mind, and genius of an unusual order was needed to work it. The occasion did not lack the fit man to rise to it, and the miracle was wrought.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) was a little, delicate man, a semi-invalid for the greater part of his life. But a powerful, originative mind and a dauntless spirit were housed in his frail body. His mother was of Huguenot ancestry, his father a resolute nonconformist who in Isaac's childhood suffered imprisonment for conscience sake. The

son was worthy of his inheritance. An offer of education for the ministry of the Church of England was declined, and he became a shining light of Independency. A ten years' ministry in London, much interrupted by ill-health, ended in an entire break-down. For the rest of his life he was an honoured guest in the house of Sir Thomas and Lady Abney. He was a man of great charm, gentle and sweet-natured, but that there was a spirit on their part no less gracious is shown by Lady Abney's remark when thirty of the thirty-four years of her remarkable hospitality had elapsed, that Dr Watts's visit had been the shortest her family had ever received. Watts's industry during those years was untiring. The many theological and philosophical works he produced were of great service in their day. But the work by which he made an abiding mark on literature and the life of the Church was as the writer of hymns that stand with the greatest in the English language, and some of them with the greatest in the world. These hymns were produced in the course of a calculated and well-devised assault on the unreasoning immobility of those who presented a stone wall of stolid and stubborn opposition to any suggestion of change in the old psalmody. In the grievous plight into which that psalmody had sunk and from which no one seemed able to raise it, Watts saw with the clear intuition of genius what needed to be done, and alone he did it.

Watts's "Renovation of Psalmody."—In the chapel at Southampton in which his family worshipped, *Barton's Psalter* was the version in use. Its quality may be judged from the allusion to it by Enoch Watts, Isaac's brother. "Honest Barton," he said, "chimes us asleep." There was no existing alternative version that offered any improvement. Watts conceived the bold scheme, not only of writing a new version, but of so renovating the substance of the psalms as to make them evangelical and

modern. If people wished to keep close to the sense of the psalms as they were originally written, he said, let them chant them in the prose version, as in the Church of England. But if they were to be metricized, he claimed the right to treat them freely, and to transfuse them with the spirit of the Gospel, so that they should be completely suitable for use in the worship of Christian people.

Taking his cue from Dr John Patrick, whose views were described in Chapter XV, he set out to better Patrick's precedent. Some psalms and portions of psalms he could do nothing with, because they were "improper for any person but the Royal Author"; these he simply omitted. In the rest, his aim was to see "David converted into a Christian," and so to make him speak as if he had been an instructed Christian of Dr Watts's own day. When, in 1719, he published *The Psalms of David imitated in the language of the New Testament, and apply'd to the Christian state and worship*, he claimed in his preface the "Pleasure of being the First who have brought down the Royal Author into the common affairs of the Christian life, and led the Psalmist of Israel into the Church of Christ, without anything of a Jew about him." This sounds curious enough, and the results of his modernisation occasionally came very near to the grotesque, but at the best they achieved indubitable greatness. It is enough to mention as examples his version of the 100th Psalm, "Before Jehovah's awful throne" (230); that of the 72nd, which gives us our first great missionary hymn (388) "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun"; and that of the 90th, to which we owe what has been pronounced the most majestic hymn in English speech (601), "O God, our help in ages past." In our gratitude for such triumphant results of his experiments in renovation, we can look with a lenient eye upon his failures.

His Hymns.—If the principle of suiting the psalms to

living Christian needs were allowed, why should not these needs be met also by giving lyrical expression to aspects of Christian thought and emotion for which the psalms could not provide? A book of religious songs ante-dating Christianity by centuries could not possibly by anticipation provide for all occasions of Christian praise, or for the expression of all Christian experiences. The Scriptures themselves command us to sing and give thanks in the name of Christ. Why then, in such singing, Watts pertinently asked, should we be forbidden even to mention that name? Why, when it is permissible to pray and preach in Christ's name, should we be required to exclude it from our praise? God's revelation in Christ, and our devotions responding to it, demand that we should in the most explicit way Christianise our worship-song. Such arguments are unanswerable, but experience shows that the point of them would have been skilfully evaded, and on some minds they would have failed to produce conviction, if he had not supported them by convincing illustrations of the kind of thing the Christian hymns he was pleading for ought to be.

It was by accident almost that he was moved to essay hymn-writing. Coming away from church one Sunday in Southampton, he spoke impatiently of the poor unworthy verse which was all that they had to sing. His father suggested that if he were so little satisfied, he should give the example of something better. The challenge was accepted. On the Sunday following, the young man was ready with the hymn which is known to Scots as the 65th Paraphrase, "Behold the glories of the Lamb," and it was "lined" out in church at evening service and sung by the people with delight. They encouraged him to continue, and he did, week by week, until over two hundred were written. These were then published (1706), and another volume followed in 1707. By and by his Psalms

and Hymns were issued in one volume. In this form they passed into very wide use in Independent churches, and people thus became accustomed to using both forms of praise. The time came when, just as they had opposed the introduction of any hymns, they resisted with equal implacability the use of any but Dr Watts's, and the only way to get new hymns into use was to introduce them in Supplements to Dr Watts. As late as the sixties of last century, 60,000 copies of his *Psalms and Hymns* were sold in a single year.

Watts's Merits.—He was modesty itself in his estimate of his own poetical powers. "I make no pretences," he said, "to the name of a poet or a polite writer, in an age when so many superior souls shine through the nation. . . . It was not my design to exalt myself to the rank and glory of poets, but I was ambitious to be a servant to the churches and a helper to the joy of the meanest Christian." This ambition was amply realised. But the one he disclaimed has also been splendidly fulfilled. The writer of the hymns already named, and of "There is a land of pure delight" (592) and "When I survey the wondrous Cross" (106), has a title to rank with the poets which no one of competence will dispute. It is admitted that he wrote much indisputable rubbish; but if he did not do the sifting of the fine grain from the chaff himself, the judgment of posterity has done that effectively for him, and the residue that stands to his credit when all deductions have been made sets his name with the most illustrious of those who have enriched the Church's treasury of devotion.

But, in addition, he set for ever the example of what the congregational hymn should be. What made his own hymns so popular was their fidelity to Scripture, their consistent objectivity and freedom from introspection, and their exact suitability, in ideas and in the limp

clearness of their language, for giving voice to the religious thought and emotion of the average believer; these qualities make his best hymns perfect for the expression of a congregation's worship. He showed also that a good hymn for popular use should have a single theme, organic unity, boldness of attack in the opening line, and a definite progression of thought throughout to a marked and decisive climax. Also, it should be short. His hymns are brief, compact, direct, and telling. Reasons like these justified James Montgomery in saying that Watts was "the real founder of English hymnody." There had been other notable singers before him, but not one had set so clear and convincing an example. But his crowning achievement was this, that whereas none before him had succeeded in persuading the Church to accept hymns for its worship, he won an entrance for them. "He acclimatised them in the Church. He broke the exclusive domination of the psalms. He vindicated the title of the Gospel to a place in the praise of the Christian sanctuary."

Watts's School.—There were many writers whose lamps were "kindled at Watts's torch." **Simon Browne** (1680-1732) was one. He was an Independent minister who laboured under the strange delusion, due to his having once killed a highwayman in self-defence, that God had annihilated his thinking substance and deprived him of consciousness. While holding this belief, he carried on a successful ministry, wrote hymns, of which 188 is a fine example, and published many books. One does not usually look for humour in a dictionary, but Chambers's *Twentieth Century Dictionary* defines "Zoanthropy" thus—"a form of mental delusion in which a man believes himself to be a beast. The devout divine, Simon Browne, under this belief devoted himself to the making of a dictionary—'I am doing nothing,' he says, 'that requires a reasonable soul: I am making a dictionary.'"

The most distinguished of Watts's disciples, however, was **Philip Doddridge** (1702-41). He was a man of delicate health, like Watts, and, also like him, refused an offer of a university education with a view to his entering the Anglican ministry. He ministered to a church at Northampton, where he conducted a seminary also to which students from all parts resorted, attracted by his lectures and the fame of his theological works. His hymns were written to enforce the lessons of his sermons in his own chapel. They were not published in his lifetime but circulated widely in manuscript. In this form a number of them were sent by him to Scotland in the course of a correspondence which he carried on with Robert Blair, one of the ministers appointed in 1745 to prepare *The Scottish Paraphrases*, and, after very free editing, were incorporated in that collection. If the originals of the Paraphrases attributed to him (481, 562) be compared with the forms of them now in use, it will be admitted that the Scottish editors greatly improved them. Doddridge's hymns have not the richness and never reach the elevation of the best of Watts's, but some of them have the true lyrical note, and the warmth of feeling that suffuses them will long ensure for them a place of honour among those which the Church delights to use. His "Hark! the glad sound" (40), and "O happy day that fixed my choice" (499), are good illustrations of his quality.

The sluice-gates were now well open; soon the stream was flowing full.

XVIII

THE GREAT REVIVAL: THE WESLEYS AND THEIR NEW SONG

IF you want to get into the eighteenth century, to feel its pulse throb beneath your finger, you should, Augustine Birrell says, ride up and down the country with the greatest force of that century in England, as you may do by reading the *Journal* of **John Wesley** (1703-91). "No man lived nearer the centre. . . . You cannot cut him out of our national life. No single figure influenced so many minds, no single voice touched so many hearts. No other man did such a life's work for England."

The moral condition of the country in his youth may be judged by the pictures of Hogarth and the pages of *Tom Jones*. Drunkenness was little accounted of, and even in those who occupied the highest places grossness and immorality were thought no disgrace. The peasantry were coarse, brutalised and savage. Highwaymen infested the country roads, and in the towns crime abounded; and there were no police to check disorder or protect the law-abiding. Education was virtually non-existent. And religion was at its lowest ebb. The English clergy as a class had the reputation of being the most lifeless in Europe, "the most remiss of their labours in private, and the least severe in their lives." The Nonconformist Churches shared in the general indifference; a cold and desiccated theology had to a great extent been substituted in their

preaching for the living Gospel. Bishop Butler declared that Christianity was held by those who wished to be regarded as people of discernment to have been proved fictitious, and "nothing remained, but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world." One shrewd and observant visitor from France confirms this; he noted that in fashionable society "everyone laughs if one talks of religion." In short, there were in the situation all the elements of social disintegration which in France culminated in the Revolution. If this country was saved from a similar disaster, it is agreed that one of the chief influences that saved it was the Revival under John Wesley.

The epic tale of that movement cannot here be told, nor, even in outline, the story of the Wesley brothers' career. But if we set out in succession the facts as to what they did to set the people they influenced singing, we follow one clue to the transformation they wrought.

Their father, the rector of Epworth, was something of a poet, and five of his children showed their possession of some poetic gift. The household was musical also; they cultivated social singing in the home, a practice then become rare. Imagine, then, the acute distaste awakened in minds of such sensibility by what John afterwards described as "the scandalous doggerel" of Sternhold and Hopkins. The father was much disappointed by his parishioners' preference of that version to the new one of Tate and Brady; he could only explain it, he said, by their "strange genius at understanding nonsense." In a letter he describes the usual rendering of the psalms as "tearing them limb from limb, and leaving sense, cadency, and all, at the mercy

of the clerk's nose." And John speaks scornfully of "a handful of unawakened striplings" singing, while the congregation are "lolling at ease, or in the indecent posture of sitting, drawing out one word after another." Thus were sown deep the seeds of dissatisfaction with the existing condition of church praise, and the desire for something worthier which was to ripen to so rich a harvest.

Where they learned their song.—The next impulse towards a better thing came on the voyage to America, when the brothers were sailing to Georgia, John to be a missionary under the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and Charles to be secretary to General Oglethorpe. Along with "Tate and Brady," John took with him for study on the voyage Watts's Hymns, Austin's Hymns, George Herbert's *Temple*, and manuscript hymns by his father and his brother Samuel. But an even better inspiration than these could yield him awaited him on board. There were twenty-six Moravian emigrants, with their bishop, in the ship. In all weathers they sang hymns, and never more fervently than in the heart of a storm. John was so stirred by what he heard that on the third day out on the long voyage he began to study German, and soon was able to join the emigrants in their worship. The hymn-books they had with them were Zinzendorf's Herrphut *Gesangbuch* and Freylinghausen's two Pietist collections, in which there was a warmer spiritual tone and a more stirring type of music than in the standard German books. The hymns he now read and heard were to Wesley a revelation. There was a spiritual richness and depth in them such as he had not found before, and the fervour and abandon with which they were sung, in such contrast with the dull and lifeless drawl of the psalmody he knew at home, moved him

profoundly. Before the voyage was over he was steeped in the contents of these hymn-books, and had already begun the work, in which he was to excel, of translating them into English verse.

The mission to America was, spiritually, a failure. But it had one notable result. Wesley introduced hymns into America. A number of selections from the books he had taken with him, and of translations from the German, he tested in sickrooms and in social devotions, as well as by discussion with friends; then he tried them in public services. Finally, he issued at Charlestown a *Collection of Psalms and Hymns*. This was in 1737, two years before the first edition of Watts's *Hymns* was published in America. But he got no credit for his pioneering enterprise. The immediate consequence was that he got into very hot water indeed. He was arraigned before the Grand Jury at Charlestown for altering the authorised psalms and for introducing into church and service at the altar compositions not inspected and authorised by any proper judicature.

Returning to London in 1738 under a sore sense of defeat, he and Charles, under the influence of the Moravian Peter Böhler, whom Charles was tutoring in English, experienced the decisive spiritual change which altered all the currents of their lives. From being narrow High Churchmen and rigid ritualists they became the free-lance evangelists and apostles of the unconventional in the presentation of the Gospel, who were to change the face of England. The day of their conversion was one of the great days in this country's history, and a red-letter day in the history of the world.

The purposes of the new song.—The place of hymns in their evangelising campaigns was one of

high importance. Both brothers realised that a good hymnody was essential for their work. Hymns were invaluable as a method of propaganda. It was partly for this reason that Charles poured them out in such unceasing profusion. Many of them were as ephemeral as daily journalism in their design and use; indeed many of them *were* pure journalism, thrown off to serve the purposes of the hour. Some were controversial; they furnished Charles with weapons for dealing sturdy blows in the theological battle. Others were educative. The great mass of the people were illiterate. Much of the preaching they heard must have been hopelessly over their heads. But they understood the clear strong sense of the hymns that were lined out in their hearing, and after they had sung them thus for a few times, they had them securely stored in memory and heart. There was no better way of indoctrinating those who were won to the faith in the truth; the installation of the transforming ideas was conveyed as much by the sung as by the spoken word. And for purposes of appeal, what could be better?

Charles was always ready at a moment's notice to "improve an occasion" by writing a hymn to drive a lesson home. He mastered a kind of shorthand in which to jot down, on cards he carried for the purpose, ideas or lines as they occurred to him. "Often he would get off his horse, throwing the reins loose to let the animal graze by the roadside, while he sat upon a stone-heap or a stile and recorded in verse the 'experiences' through which his soul had passed in some little conventicle where he had been holding forth the Word of Life." But he wrote anywhere, everywhere; even on his deathbed he dictated hymns when his hand could no longer hold the pen. The purely temporary uses of

much of what he wrote explain the enormous and unceasing fertility of his muse. Whereas Watts produced the large total of about 600 hymns, Charles Wesley left about 6500.

In such a mass, of course, there was a vast deal that was worthless after its immediate purpose had been served. Charles had no discriminative faculty with regard to his own hymns, but John in revising and winnowing them showed remarkable judgment. The verdict he once passed on some of them might apply to them in the mass—"some bad, some mean, some most excellently good." We may add, "some superlatively good." For the language contains no loftier, more truly inspired hymns than a number of Charles Wesley's. "Hark, the herald angels sing," "Christ the Lord is risen to-day," "Hail the day that sees Him rise," "O for a thousand tongues to sing," "Jesus, Lover of my soul," "Love Divine, all loves excelling," "Rejoice, the Lord is King"—hymns like these, tested by any canon of religion or of art, must be ranked with the highest. They are perfect as lyrics, and the faith, the fire, the joyous exaltation of spirit that thrill and uplift us in them make them perfect for the worship of the Christian soul.

But Charles Wesley's service to hymnody does not end even there. He brought into existence *two new kinds of hymn*, the hymn of Christian experience and the evangelistic hymn. Watts's hymns are objective. Wesley, like the Pietists, from whom much of his own and his brother's inspiration came, mediated through the Moravians, translates into hymnic expression every mood and emotion of the soul. Many of his hymns are frankly autobiographical. This is the source of their passion. His own soul was kindled as he wrote them, and our souls catch fire from them as we sing. They

throb with life. The emotion of a hymn like "Jesus, Lover of my soul," written at white heat, is irresistible; it rouses our dormant faith and gives it wings to soar with something of the same rapture. Wesley did a great thing in giving the dumb experiences and emotions of multitudes of Christians such manifold, sincere, and moving expression. In their campaigns the Wesleys found the value also of making the Gospel appeal through simple, direct and tender hymns, exhorting and entreating sinners to return to God. There are no better examples than in many of Charles's hymns of how a thing so difficult should be done. They are free from the triviality and vulgarity which often deface hymns of this type.

John Wesley's Hymns, though not original, take their place in a very high class. He was a consummate translator. No art is more difficult. He was a master in it. He naturalised the foreigner in English thought and speech. He was not content to convey in more or less singable verse the sense of the original; he fused it in the alembic of his own spirit, and reproduced it in a form which has all the freshness and life of an original hymn. To Emerson once Oliver Wendell Holmes said that most hymns were mere cabinet-work, not poetry, but there was one supreme hymn, "Thou hidden love of God" (459). "I know, I know," agreed Emerson, "that is the supreme hymn." Much of the merit that made such sound judges set it so high is due to the fact that Tersteegen's original was re-born in John Wesley's soul before he gave it its perfect expression. Equally lofty in dignity and beauty are "Jesus, Thy boundless love to me" (432), and "Thee will I love, my Strength, my Tower" (431).

The hymns of the two brothers set half England singing, and by and by, reluctantly, the Church of

England, which abhorred the Wesleyan movement, with what the Earl of Carlisle called its "dark, odious and ridiculous enthusiasm," was drawn into singing the best of them also. They gave a living voice to what was most vital in the religion of the whole land.

XIX

THE GREAT REVIVAL: THE HYMNS OF THE CALVINISTS

ALL great spiritual movements are cradled in controversy. Criticism is inevitably directed upon them by those who stand outside; but the indraught of enthusiasm created by them brings in many whose evangelical sympathies may be in harmony with them, but whose differing views of doctrine soon cause internal strain. The Methodist Revival was no exception. The Wesleys found themselves not only excluded from many pulpits of the Church to which they belonged, but at variance with many who began by working with them. **Edward Perronet**, for example (1726-92), author of "All hail the power of Jesus' name" (139), after co-operating with them devotedly, broke with them on the question of administering the Sacraments. He had a restless, critical spirit which made him an uncomfortable yoke-fellow, and finally left him ploughing a lonely furrow in Canterbury, with few to friend him but William Shrubsole, who set to his hymn its familiar tune "Miles Lane." **John Cennick** also (1718-55), who owed his soul to John Wesley and was one of his first lay-preachers, a sincere but unstable man, easily worked upon and drawn away by stronger minds than his own, failed the Wesleys first, and then Whitefield, and ended among the Moravians (160, 294, 574).

But nothing pained the Wesleys more than the estrangement and separation which divided them from their dear friend George Whitefield. He had been one of the little

band of Oxford men to which they both belonged and which earned the nicknames of "the Holy Club," "the Bible-bigots," and, especially, "the Methodists." He was a preacher of a power rarely equalled, with a wonderful voice and a grand rushing eloquence which made the passion of his heart for saving souls wellnigh irresistible when he spoke. Wherever he went, crowds hung upon his lips, and sobs and groans told of the emotions he aroused; he was the instrument of innumerable conversions. But he lacked the gift of bringing in his sheaves; he had no power of drawing his converts together, organising them, building them up. In that gift John Wesley excelled; he has been called the greatest religious organiser since Ignatius Loyola. Had these men but held together, their united power would have made the great revival even more fruitful and far-reaching than it was.

But doctrinally they were not agreed. Whitefield was not a thinker. He subscribed without question to the dominant Calvinistic theology, whereas the Wesleys, under Moravian influence, had become convinced and passionate Arminians. The iron doctrines of the Calvinistic creed—predestination, election, a limited salvation, the denial of effectual grace to the non-elect, and the claim of irresistible grace for the elect—inexpressibly shocked the Wesleys, who with their whole souls preached the doctrines of free grace for every soul, and universal redemption. No compromise was possible between two such irreconcilable beliefs. The friends loved one another, but they parted, and the breach was never fully healed.

A wider cleavage than the personal one was inevitable. The revival movement ran now in two different channels. The opposing dogmas became the watchwords of the two sides in a controversy which raged all over the country with a heat and virulence hardly credible to-day. The language used by the Calvinists in their attacks on

John Wesley stains the memory of those who stooped to it. But the heat and misunderstanding were by no means only on one side. John Wesley could use strong language also, and some of Charles's hymns are battle-cries. When he sang indignantly "Take back my interest in Thy blood unless it flowed for all the race," his vehemence was plainly designed to fire the hearts of those his words might reach, and to carry the war into the enemy's camp. For it was war; truth was at stake, and in the blows they dealt the opponents showed no quarter.

One of the bitterest of the champions of Calvinism was **Augustus Montagu Toplady** (1740-78). A good man, passionately in earnest, when he signed the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England on his ordination, he adhibited his name five times to show how whole-heartedly it was done. His mind was so eager and his soul so much aflame with the evangelising spirit that the frail instrument of his body could not stand the strain. After a short ministry at Broadhembury he went to London and associated himself with the Countess of Huntingdon. She was an ardent Calvinist, and to ensure that the type of doctrine she favoured should be adequately preached she built chapels all over the country and appointed to them ministers to whom she gave the status of private chaplains to herself, until the law compelled her to secede from the Church of England and organise them in an independent Connexion. One of her most notable chaplains was **Thomas Haweis** (1734-1820), composer of the tune "Richmond," and author of Hymn 306. Another was Toplady. When he preached at Leicester Fields, London, multitudes flocked to hear him; as many as 1300 horses were sometimes turned loose in the adjoining fields during service. It seems deplorable that a man of such spiritual intensity and power should have been scurrilous beyond measure in controversy. To such extremes did he go

that Wesley on one occasion said, "Mr Augustus Toplady I know well, but I do not fight with chimney-sweeps; he is too dirty a writer for me to meddle with."

But it is possible for the same fountain to send forth both sweet and bitter. The same quarrel that produced so much unworthiness gave birth also to what is probably the greatest hymn in the English tongue. "Rock of Ages" (413) was written as a retort to what Toplady understood to be Wesley's doctrine of perfectionism, with the title, "A living and dying Prayer for the holiest believer in the world." Artistically, criticism has found the hymn by no means invulnerable, but it goes to the heart of the Gospel, and for that reason it has touched the heart of the whole Christian world. It is significant that in a plebiscite taken by an English magazine as to the hundred best hymns in the language, "Rock of Ages" was at the head of the list with 3215 out of 3500 votes. Toplady's other hymns stand in no kind of comparison with this one; but indeed for truth and feeling and lyrical power very few hymns in existence can stand beside it. (560, 561, 703.)

The Olney Hymns came also of the Calvinistic school of thought. It was an immeasurable misfortune that when William Cowper (1732-1800) became concerned about his spiritual condition the man he sought advice from was Martin Madan (1726-90), then carrying on at the Lock Hospital Chapel the influential ministry which was to be brought to a strange end by his publication of a book in which he advocated a return to polygamy. There were phases of the Calvinistic doctrine that were the worst possible medicament to apply to the sore ailment of a spirit so sensitive and a mind so precariously poised as Cowper's. In all their uncompromising harshness this man applied them. To the end of his days the poor poet was never free from the spiritual tyranny of the remorse-

less creed of Martin Madan. Leslie Stephen may be right in his view that "when Cowper's intellect was once unhinged, he found a congenial expression for the tortures of his soul in the imagery provided by the sternest of Christian sects"; but it is not possible to refrain from speculation as to what difference it might have made to that shadowed mind and tormented spirit if in his hour of need he had had presented to him the full Gospel of the love and free grace of God. As it was, when he came to write hymns, the shadow lay over them; all of them bear the marks of the dark conflicts of his soul.

What led to his writing them was his friendship with **John Newton** (1725-1807), the Calvinistic curate of Olney. Two friends apparently so ill-assorted it would be difficult to find. What could there be in common between the rough old sea-dog and slave-trader who in early manhood had sounded almost every depth of iniquity before Christ laid his arrest on him and led him captive, and the refined, gentle, and almost effeminate poet? Yet on both sides the friendship was in many respects almost ideal. The tough sailor with the iron nerves, who hardly knew what illness meant, could be as tender as a woman, and the affectionate solicitude with which he tended Cowper in his times of mental alienation helps us to understand the bigness and warmth of heart that drew the poet to him. But even a great affection can be unwise, and the means to which Newton resorted to alleviate his friend's malady were ill calculated to relieve it. He set him visiting the poor of his flock, not realising how exhausting such visiting can be to a sympathetic spirit. He induced him to take part in prayer-meetings, not understanding what the agitation of anticipation must have meant to a retiring nature like Cowper's, unaccustomed to lead public devotions. And he engaged him in the joint task of writing a book of hymns, without any

perception that such an occupation must send the poor man's spirit sounding in the deep waters that so often completely overwhelmed his soul.

But Newton meant well, and, whatever the cost to Cowper, the hymns take their place with the Church's best. The seven by Cowper in the *Hymnary* are unmatched for "depth of religious feeling and for loveliness of quiet style," and the nine by Newton are worthy to stand beside them. For Newton had genuine literary power. His autobiography is one of the most vivid pieces of self-revelation in literature; and though many of his hymns do not rise above the level of the plain homiletical purpose they were meant to serve, there are others so full of the rough strength and glowing faith of the man's powerful personality that they have won a permanent place among the hymns that are dear to all Christian hearts. It is true to say, however, of the collection as a whole, that it was not well fitted for the place of influence that was given to it in Churches of the Calvinistic school. The Christian experience of neither writer was in any sense typical. The remorse and self-contempt of "the old blasphemer," as Newton called himself, and the dejection, the despondency, the sense of exile from God, which darkened upon Cowper's spirit till he died in black despair, kept alive for long in evangelical hymnody an element of morbidity and unwholesomeness which did much to lower the tone of religious life. That alloyed metal is now removed from use, and for the sterling gold the two friends have passed into the spiritual currency the whole Church owns its debt.

The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists.—It was through the Calvinistic revival at this time that the Welsh Presbyterian Church came into existence, and its characteristic hymns bear the marks of their origin. Archdeacon Prys's Welsh translation of the Psalms, from which we derive

our beautiful tune "St Mary," had furnished the material of the Principality's church praise till then ; but when the preaching of the Rev. Daniel Rowlands and Howel Harris set all Wales astir with the rising energies of a new spiritual springtime, the spirit of song was awakened as never before, and a new hymnody was created to give it voice. Incomparably the greatest of the new singers was **William Williams** of Pantecelyn (1717-91), of whose apostolic journeys and quickening ministry all Wales cherishes the tradition. He wrote 800 hymns. Soon many of them were on all lips and in all hearts ; they furnished a large element in the religious education of the country. Two have long been known and loved in English-speaking Churches (387, 564). Two others (384, 445) appear in the *Hymnary*, in the new edition, for the first time. Williams was pre-eminently "the sweet singer of Wales." With him should be named **David Charles** of Carmarthen (1762-1834), whose "From heavenly Jerusalem's towers" (596), to its beautiful tune "Crug y bar," is universally loved in Wales.

If the vernacular hymns of Wales yield but a scanty harvest for English use, the reasons are clear. Translation, for one thing, is almost impossible ; there are few versions from which the sap of the originals has not been crushed in the process of translation. The imagery also, especially the characteristic use of nature to reflect the experience of the soul, does not furnish non-Welsh singers with a natural language for their emotions. And in Wales the ideas and speech of eighteenth-century Calvinism have lingered longer than in churches which use the English tongue. A religious idiom continues in use there, therefore, which singers of other Churches find it difficult freely or sincerely to employ. Hymn 384 gives an example. The contribution of Wales to modern hymnody is made, and nobly, in a medium for which no translation

is necessary. No country in the world, except Germany, has a finer singing tradition, and few have superior riches in tunes such as congregations love to sing. For the first time, in the new *Hymnary*, Presbyterianism outside of Wales is made rich by these splendid melodies.

XX

THE ROMANTIC REVIVAL

THE beginning of the nineteenth century saw a great intellectual revival throughout Western Europe. It has been defined as the Renascence of Wonder. Partly it was due to a revolt against the Deism of the preceding century, an influence whose aridity dried up the springs of imagination and was felt in every field of life and thought. Partly also it was due to the stirring of a new spirit of inquiry, and the awakening of men's minds to many wonderful realities of life which the superficial rationalism of the previous century had contrived to ignore. Among these forgotten realities were the glories of the past. "Rationalism was an optimism which glorified its own enlightened age, and pitied the ignorance and superstition of the earlier men." Thus the mental outlook of the *illuminati* of that period was bounded by their own self-satisfaction and their scorn for the vision and achievement of ages which their limitations made them unable to understand. The awakening of the historical imagination which came with the new century unscaled men's eyes. The past was revealed to them, but in something more than its proper glory; they saw it through a haze of romanticism which hid its darker features and bathed it in a light that never was on sea or land.

No man contributed more powerfully to this idealisation than Sir Walter Scott. Men read his wonderful romances with an astonishment into which we now cannot enter, because they recreated for them a world they had

forgotten, and invested it with attractions which beguiled them into the belief that somewhere in that glamorous world of long ago lay the true golden age. History was not yet ready to correct their mistaken suppositions. They did not realise that the past Sir Walter pictured never really existed. The facts of history merely gave him his starting-ground; for the rest, the world he created was but the substance of a poet and romancer's dream.

His method of treating history, however, altered for many people their whole view of periods as to which the judgment of historians had been regarded as finally settled. And his was but one of many influences that set men peering eagerly into the past as into a country long forgotten, trying to recreate it, and searching to see what treasures for the present it might have to yield. Soon it became evident that for the Church there were heart stirring things to be discovered there.

The Forgotten Hymnody of the medieval Church, for example, began to excite many imaginations. When the Reformation took place, Cranmer adapted the devotional material of *The Roman Breviary* to the changed thought of the Church, and transmuted much of it into the form in which it is now familiar in *The Book of Common Prayer*. But he did not translate the Breviary hymns. It may have been that his reason was similar to that which induced Calvin to reject them altogether, that they were too deeply saturated with Roman error. More probably, however, it was that he had not himself the capacity to translate them into verse, and that in the dearth of poetical ability at that time he could find no one to translate them adequately for him. Many of the best minds in the Church deeply regretted this loss. We have seen how, among others, Drummond of Hawthornden and Bishop Cosin had tried to retrieve something of the lost material. They and others did their best to revive

the old seemly custom of observing the great occasions of the Christian Year. Bishop Ken had done the same ; he published a set of *Hymns and Poems for the Holy Days and Festivals of the Church*. Herbert also had done his part. But the mind of the Church was not yet ready to follow any leadership in such a direction.

The ripe time arrived with the Renascence of Wonder. And the man who led the way was **Reginald Heber** (1783-1826). Thackeray pays glowing and deserved tribute in *The Four Georges* to him as "one of the best of English gentlemen, the charming poet, the happy possessor of all sorts of gifts and accomplishments, birth, wit, fame, high character, competence." Heber laid all these gifts and his life itself on the altar of offering to God. Among other dreams he cherished was that of making a hymn-book which would provide for the Church Year and to which the chief poets then living—Scott, Southey, Moore, Milman—would make some contribution. From none of these did he actually receive help but **Henry Hart Milman** (1791-1868), the distinguished poet and historian, and Dean of St Paul's. But Milman's contributions (92, 329, 455) justly so delighted him that he felt he would soon be independent of the rest. His life, however, was not to be spared to the completion of his venture ; his *Hymns written and adapted to the Weekly Church Service of the Year* were not published until after his death in India. It was Heber's great distinction that practically every hymn he wrote is in common use (1, 64, 159, 293, 309, 318, 371, 530). His book had a further effect in directing other minds along the same channel ; it set other imaginations aflame.

This tendency gained a great impetus from the rediscovery by some of the leading romanticists of the hymnic treasures of the Breviaries. A copy of *The Paris Breviary*, brought from France by Sir John Prevost, one of Keble's

circle in Oxford, was a revelation to Keble himself and to his friend **Isaac Williams** (1802-65). The latter immediately began to translate the hymns he found there from Latin into English, and published a number of them in *The British Magazine*. There they caught the eye of a young Surrey curate, **John Chandler** of Witley (1806-76), and fired his imagination also. He had previously believed that no good could come out of what he called Popish missals, because they must be as "barbarous in their latinity as defective in their doctrine." Williams's versions, though designedly made so rough as to render the use of them in church impossible, opened his eyes to the fine gold that lay hidden in that distrusted quarter. He at once procured copies of *The Paris Breviary* and of Casander's *Hymni Sacri* of 1536, and in 1837 he published *The Hymns of the Primitive Church, now first collected, translated, and arranged*. He was not yet aware that many of those hymns were not primitive at all; those of Charles Coffin, for example, were of the seventeenth century. But his translations (78, 274), which were free and adapted to modern use, and those of Williams, whose *Hymns translated from The Parisian Breviary* appeared in 1839, still further stimulated interest in the ore that lay ready for the working in an unexploited field. **Bishop Mant** (1776-1848) also, in 1837, produced a volume of translations, for domestic use, and in 1838 a greater than any of these, **John Henry Newman** (1801-90), issued two volumes, not of translations, but of the texts of the Latin hymns themselves, entitled *Hymni Ecclesiae* (Hymns of the Church), laying the new country open to all who wished to explore it.

It is impossible to follow the whole course of this new development, but among the translators who came later into the field one or two deserve specially honourable mention. **Edward Caswall** (1814-78), one of the rare

spirits who with a beautiful devotion followed Newman into the Church of Rome, merits our affection by his character and our honour by his gifts to us in such translations—among the best loved of our hymns—as “Jesus, the very thought of Thee,” “O Jesus, King most wonderful,” “When morning gilds the skies,” to name no more. And **John Mason Neale** (1816-66), who did not leave the Church of England, but remained in it, though without official honour and practically without benefice because of his advanced views with regard to ritual, now holds high place in the gratitude of hymn-lovers in all the Churches. To no one do we owe more for the revivification of much of the dead hymnody of old years. He was the most learned of hymnologists and liturgiologists, a master of medieval Latin and of Greek, and a man of genius and a poet besides. An amusing story illustrates his mastery of Latin. One day when Keble returned after a brief absence from the room in a house where they were together, Neale said to him, “I thought you said, Keble, that *The Christian Year* was entirely original.” “Yes,” Keble said, “and so certainly it is.” “Then how comes this?” asked Neale, handing him a copy of one of his poems in unmistakable medieval Latin! Keble protested that he had never seen that original before, and was in great perturbation, until Neale relieved him by confessing that he had himself written the Latin translation during the brief time of Keble’s absence. Neale brought great stores of medieval and ancient treasures, hymnodic and liturgic, to light, from libraries and monasteries on the continent and in the East, and translated them with a master-hand. Many of his versions are among the dearest of our hymns. They are too numerous to name here. Let “Jerusalem the Golden,” “The day is past and over,” “O come, O come, Immanuel,” and “O happy band of pilgrims,” stand sponsors for the rest.

Honourable mention is due also to **Richard Frederick Littledale** (1833-90), a translator of prodigious learning, who, however, is represented in the *Hymnary* only by one version from the Italian of the fifteenth century (191), but whose influence through his translations from Latin and Greek was great in the Church of England; and **Dr John Brownlie** (1859-1925), of the United Free Church of Scotland, whose diligent and able work in the field of Greek hymnody is meagrely represented by his fine version of Gregory Nazianzen's "O Light that knew no dawn" (458).

All this revival of ancient hymnody brought about a revolution in the Church of England. It won a welcome within it for the liturgical hymn, which has been one of the factors in producing in that Church the Catholic Revival. For the Churches which stand outside of that remarkable development of romanticism, it has brought an enrichment which needs but to be displayed to be acknowledged, in many of the noblest of their standard hymns.

Medieval Music also engaged the enthusiastic study of the romanticists. The cult of the Gregorian Tones has been zealously fostered in the Church of England; in many of its churches where an advanced ritual is observed it has completely supplanted the native Anglican chant. Its old-world charm and its exclusive association with divine worship, and the fact that it derives from the ancient past of the Church which the romanticists idealise, the fact also that it helps imaginative spirits to create an atmosphere of that catholicity which is a greater and finer thing than Catholicism ever can be, weave through it a spell which there is no denying. But as always throughout its history it is a medium of praise for priests and choirs, not for the people, and its triumphs are everywhere won at the expense of congregational song.

XXI

THE OXFORD MOVEMENT

IN the early decades of the nineteenth century great and vitalising forces were stirring in the land. It was a time of unusual interest and promise. A new spirit was abroad, questioning, quickening, in every field of thought and life. The evidences of its activity, however, had nothing to say to some minds except of danger. Old conventions were breaking down; the established order felt itself shaken at many points. Even the Church became sensible of a disquieting insecurity. Hostile eyes were turned upon it, and discerning minds saw that its place in the settled order of things would soon be no longer taken for granted; its character and spirit must be its justification and defence. But it was ill-prepared to stand any ordeal of testing. For the most part, it was only bewildered by the crisis in which it found itself, like a man suddenly aroused out of sleep. For indeed it had been sleeping. The typical clergyman is graphically pictured in the fiction of the time, as the jolly, high-living, fox-hunting sportsman, or at best the unexacting moral monitor of the parish, the preacher of unexceptionable but dry moralities that had nothing in them to move men to salutary heart-searching or to arouse their consciences to the urgent claims of God. The current evangelicalism had grown flaccid, worldly; its teaching, as Hurrell Froude put it, was largely "a system of unreal words," echoing doctrines once instinct with potent life, but now empty and devitalised. And on the other hand, there

was a strong rationalising school at work, criticising keenly and searching remorselessly the very foundations of belief, so that many thought the whole fabric of faith in peril. These conditions aroused grave concern in the best minds of the Church. A group of them in Oxford discussed anxiously the possibilities of spiritual revival.

Their leader and inspirer was **John Keble** (1792-1866). To all appearance no man could be less fitted for any leadership. Shy, quiet-loving, homely and plain in manner and in speech, shrinking with horror from anything in the least suggestive of obtrusion or display, this "country-bred Englishman, jealous of everything brilliant and on his guard against anything hollow, masked to common eyes at once the poet and the saint. . . . He was eminently one of those persons who remind the world by the way in which, in spite of themselves, they become the object of deep interest, and by the contrast between that interest and what there is to account for it, that there is a greatness greater than the highest of this world." By the sheer silent force of his personality he impressed himself on the imagination of young Oxford as few men have ever done. He was a brilliant scholar—a Fellow of Oriel at the early age of nineteen; but it was much less his intellectual than his spiritual distinction that gathered a kind of halo round his very name. Newman has told us of the leap of his heart with eagerness and awe when, as a young freshman, he for the first time heard someone say, "There's Keble." And when, in due time, he too was elected to the then august circle at the high table of Oriel and went to receive the congratulations of the other Fellows, "I bore it," he wrote, "till Keble took my hand, and then felt so abashed and unworthy of the honour that I seemed desirous of quite sinking into the ground." But behind the unworldly grace and beauty of Keble's soul there was a force of resolution and an iron moral strength

which had their source in an ever-present consciousness of the unseen, and all this latent energy was now enlisted in the desire to see the Church awakened from her torpor and invested again with what should be her native spiritual power.

But all his views of what was necessary to be done were coloured by the fact that he was a High Churchman of the old school, an intense sacramentarian, and a romanticist full of the most beautiful idealisations of the Church's past. In all senses a conservative, he viewed the tendencies of the time, with their inquisitiveness and adventurousness and lack of respect for old things because they were old, not only without sympathy, but with active dread. And while he longed to see the Church arising from the dust and putting on her beautiful garments, of holiness and of the authority with which she had been invested of God, mingling with and qualifying the spirituality of his dream was the desire to see the Church, thus restored to power, standing as an effective barrier across the path of the progressive influences which to him seemed to be threatening what was most sacred in the land.

All that was finest in his spirit and most winning in his ideals shines lustrous in the poems of *The Christian Year*. The inspiration of these had been largely drawn from Ken, but their spirit and substance are Keble's own. Nowhere does the romantic revival, as it threw its glamour over the Church, find more beautiful expression. Principal Fairbairn remarks that in these poems there is nothing of the passion of the mystic who is eager to transcend all means to get into living communion with the Divine, but rather a spirit "which loves means as means, feels joy in their use, in reading their meaning, in being subdued by their gentle discipline; and which loves God all the better for the seemliness and stateliness of the way we get to Him. . . . His love of God became love of his

own Church, of what she had been, of what she was, and, above all, of what she ought to be ; of her ancient monuments, her venerable institutions, her stately ceremonial, her saints and saints' days. And by his sweet, meditative, poetic gift he made what he loved seem lovely. What ecclesiastical polemics, parochial activity, and sacerdotal ritual never could have accomplished, his hymns achieved ; indeed, they not only made those others possible, but even necessary, creating for them that disposition, that readiness to receive, to learn, and to trust, which is, according to Newman, the greater part of faith." These poems are not hymns ; they are for reading rather than singing ; but hymns of a rare loveliness have been extracted from them, among them the fine morning hymn " O timely happy, timely wise " (259), and the evening hymn " Sun of my soul " (292) which stands among the first hymns in the affection of the whole Church. The significance of the book, however, is that it created the atmosphere for the Catholic Revival ; it invested the old usages of the Church with poetic beauty, and made the finer minds of the Church fall in love with the lost grace of devotion. It is not possible to exaggerate the effect of this book in preparing the way for the great change that was coming.

But in another way Keble set the new spirit in motion. Newman has testified that it was a sermon Keble preached on " National Apostasy " that gave impulse and direction to the forces of Church reform. Unhappily the effect of it was to turn the faces of the reformers resolutely in a reactionary direction, and to put them entirely out of sympathy with the most vital forces that were moving towards change in the world around. To those who gathered round Keble the influences that were at work in political and social reform seemed to issue from minds that were alienated from God, if not in rebellion against

Him. War, therefore, was declared on the Time-Spirit, and the weapon by which its sinister activities were to be fought was to be a Church restored to the spiritual authority she had wielded in the Middle Ages, clothed in her lost glory and armed with her ancient power. To recover the splendour of the ancient ceremonial, restoring all that the Reformers had filched from her, and to endue her once more with the mystical power inherent in her sacraments, became the glowing ideal of the leaders of this new Reformation.

It was an ideal that kindled the imagination of one of the noblest minds ever consecrated to God's service. We cannot dwell on the story of the life of **John Henry Newman** (1801-90)—of how after the period of acute heart-searching of which the poignant expression was poured into the hymn "Lead, kindly Light," he came to the conviction that he was called of God to do a great work for England and its Church; how he laboured by such preaching as Oxford had never before heard ("like a strain of unearthly music," Principal Shairp said), and by the famous *Tracts for the Times* and other writings in the pellucid and persuasive English of which he was one of the greatest masters, to bring the Church back to her forgotten ideals and lost loyalties; how from the sound conclusion that the Church can have no stability without a dogmatic principle, he went wrong in his thinking by going on to conclude that there can be no such unquestionable principle without an absolutely authoritative and infallible Church; how, driven by the force of his own reasoning upon this fatal assumption, he came to doubt whether the Church of England possessed the apostolicity and catholicity which are the essential notes of such an authoritative Church, and ended by being shut up to the conviction that no Church possessed them but the Church of Rome; and of how, on reaching this conclusion, he

resigned his charge and spent three years in anxious and often agonised debate with himself upon the issue, but in the end saw no way open to him but to enter the Roman Church. The story should be read as he himself wrote it in his *Apologia pro vita sua*, one of the most remarkable autobiographies in our literature.

Rome never won a greater trophy, yet it had no use for even so illustrious a recruit. The years he spent in its Communion were for the most part years of frustration and defeat. In his later years the Cardinalate consoled him, and he was cheered by the veneration of men of all Communions who honour character and high integrity and revere saintliness when they see it. They recognised that whatever might be his intellectual errors, and they were not small, it was his passion for religion and his fidelity to what he believed to be his light that impelled him into them. "The Roman Catholic in Newman," said R. H. Hutton, "is as deep as his thought; the High Churchman as deep as his temperament, and the Christian as deep as his character, being intertwined with it inextricably—nay, not only intertwined, but identified." And because he was a great Christian, and in ideal and spirit a witness to his generation, we rejoice to sing the hymns (32, 249, 260, 568) which represent all the poetic fruit of his genius which we can claim for the service of a faith which, while separated from his by many differences, is yet in its fundamental loyalties the same.

Newman's secession to Rome drew many after him. **Frederick Oakeley** (1802-80), translator of "O come, all ye faithful" (55), was one; **Edward Caswall**, to whom reference has already been made, was another. A notable third was **Frederick Faber** (1814-63). Like Newman, he was of Huguenot extraction and of evangelical upbringing, and he started writing with a strong polemic against the Church of Rome. Temperamentally, however,

he was susceptible to all the sensuous charms with which the Roman ritual beguiles men to her creed, and once the spell began to work there was no restraining him. Even before he left the Church of England he was practising many of the most characteristic Roman rites, and when he went over, he became almost more Roman than the Romans, a whole-souled and enthusiastic devotee of the extremest claims and practices of the Church of his adoption. He was a man of great personal charm and persuasiveness of speech, genial, kindly, socially attractive ("Cheerfulness," he said, "is the first thing, and the second, and the third"), and from the pulpit of the Oratory in London where his later years were spent, he cast over many the spell that made them follow him into his new allegiance. He wrote many devotional books, curious medleys of literary beauty, spiritual suggestiveness and evangelical fervour, and of extravagances of idea and expression. His hymns were written to supply Roman Catholics with an equivalent of the evangelical hymns of Cowper and Newton. Of these he himself never ceased to feel the power; they haunted him, and long after he had forsaken the creed expressed in them, he acknowledged that their lines came, unbidden, singing through his mind. Some of his own hymns have the same quality—"Souls of men, why will ye scatter?" (395), "Hark, hark, my soul!" (580), and "My God, how wonderful Thou art" (27), for example; but they all need editing. His lofty flights are never long sustained; suddenly he comes to earth in some utterly infelicitous or overstrained expression, or an endearing epithet which it would seem irreverence for us to echo, as in "*Sweet Saviour, bless us ere we go*" (302); or he lapses into undoubted doggerel. By what is best in his hymns, however, he has made a deep mark on the religious life of the country.

Many of those who were most ardent in following Newman in his Oxford days did not follow him into the Church of Rome. They remained with Keble, to infuse a new spirit into the Church from within. Here let it be said only that their aims have been to a great extent realised. They did vitalise the Church of England. They succeeded in raising the fallen standard of the idea of the Church, in lifting high "the reality of a great spiritual society extending through all Christian ages, living by its own truth and life," and in reviving the sense of her spiritual mission and inspiring the devotion and energy with which she labours to fulfil it. She has recovered much that was stately and expressive in the order and worship of the past, and her ideal of worship has affected, in the main advantageously, the ideals of most other Churches in the land. And her contribution to hymnody, as we shall see in next chapter, has been valuable beyond expression.

XXII

MAIN CURRENTS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY HYMNODY

THERE were many minds, and among them some of the first order, in Oxford and the country, whom the Neo-Catholic Movement which Keble and Newman initiated utterly repelled. Two may stand as examples. **Arthur Hugh Clough** (1819-61) was at first drawn into it by its passionate idealism, "like a straw drawn up the draught of a chimney," but he soon found his intellect revolted by its untenable assumptions, and was driven, by his passion for truth, in the extremity of the reaction, into rejection of all the creeds. His rarely gifted spirit never ceased to be fundamentally and finely religious, but the overdraft on his faith made by the extravagant claims of the Tractarian school drove him regretfully into doubt of the whole system of Christian belief. Because his noble and sincere mind was still "on the side of the angels," however, it is good to be able to use his words (536), when the signs of the times discourage and the Christian battle seems to go back, for the reassurance and uplifting of our hope. **Edwin Hatch** (1835-89), another brilliant Oxford scholar, came somewhat later, after the more tumultuous period of the stirring of the waters by the Tractarians was overpast, but in his day the tide of the new movement was still flowing strong. He had a European reputation as a historical investigator in the region of the bases of Christian institutions; and it is very significant that this independent and fearless inquirer, as the result of his application of scientific method to the testing of the data, came to

the firm conviction, and published unanswerable evidence in support of it, that the foundation on which the Anglo-Catholics rested their claims was historically unsound. The hymn " Breathe on me, Breath of God " (194), we owe to this courageous disciple of the truth.

The Broad Church School.—In the height of the crisis there were notable men in the Church who endeavoured to make it plain that the new movement was turning the Church's face in the wrong direction. Its duty, they held, was not to fix its eyes upon the past, but sympathetically to consider the needs of the living present, and to enter into the ideals and aims that were rapidly shaping the future. Their leader, Frederick Maurice, was " a personality of rare charm, with a soul ever turned to the light, with a large range of vision, and a love of love and light that makes him the most mystical thinker of his century ; yet his whole life was one sustained protest against the attempt to incorporate the religion of Christ in a sentimental and sacramental symbolism." He and those who were with him were intensely alive to the Church's social duty. Their passionate interest in the life of the people, and their eagerness for the rectification of the wrongs and disabilities under which they suffered, may be judged by the spirit animating Kingsley's *Alton Locke* and *Yeast*. They exposed themselves to misunderstanding by attaching to their aims the label of Christian Socialism. In reality they were great-hearted Christian humanitarians, and this entitled them to more sympathy and support than they received. At least they were men of their time. The leading Tractarians were not. Judged by their writings they were entirely untouched by the ideas of social and industrial reform which were then fermenting in the minds of the common people, and which carried within them the seeds of the developments which since then have changed the entire orientation of domestic

politics in that field. "They were more interested," said Mrs Humphrey Ward, "in the date of the Book of Daniel or the retention of the Athanasian Creed than in the Education Bill of 1870."

Not so **Dean Stanley** (1815-81), that singularly attractive and brave spirit (88, 129); **Tom Hughes** (1823-96), (531), the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, and, like Stanley, a worthy disciple of that great inspirer and moulder of noble men, Arnold of Rugby; and **Charles Kingsley** (1819-75), (351), dauntless knight-errant of many noble causes, and so convinced a Protestant that the resurgence of sacerdotalism in the Oxford Movement filled him with dread, which found frequent and sometimes not too well-judged expression, of what its triumph might mean in the sapping of the faith and character that had been the secret of his country's greatness. But, for all the strength of their convictions, these men never organised a party or formulated a policy. Maurice regarded parties in the Church as one of the gravest of evils. And there was an indefiniteness in their views of the nature and office of the Church which was a heavy handicap in a contest for the mind of the nation with the very definite and attractive conceptions which the Tractarians offered for acceptance. Broad Churchism, therefore, was never more than an influence, and for that reason Neo-Catholicism, well organised and well directed, and with the driving force of passionate conviction behind it, produced effects that were far more pervasive, deeper-reaching, and longer-lasting; it survives now in greater power than ever, while the Broad Church ideas either linger obscurely and ineffectively in the field, or are absorbed by other schools.

The Evangelical School, through all these polemics and unsettlements, continued to disseminate the teaching which had been the inspiration of all that had been best

in the piety and the philanthropy of the English people. Throughout the century it was productive of much hymnody that has passed into the currency of the Church's worship. Many loved and saintly names are associated with it. Among them women are prominent. It is striking to observe how many of these "learned in suffering what they taught in song"—**Charlotte Elliott** (1789-1871), whose "Just as I am" (411) is one of the classics of devotion, and whose other hymns (408, 449, 523, 539) are treasured; **Jennette Threlfall** (1821-80), of whose broken body no one would ever dream, who, hearing or singing "Hosanna, loud hosanna" (93), felt the heart thrill with the exultation of her joyous song; **Frances Ridley Havergal** (1836-79), the chief among our singers of Christian consecration, in many hymns that are dear to the Church's heart (509, 512, 519, etc.); **Dora Greenwell** (1821-82), whose prose and verse both rank her with the great devotional writers, and whose one hymn in the *Hymnary* (698) finely illustrates what was her chief pre-occupation, the transcendent fact of the Atonement; **Elizabeth Clephane** (1830-69), whose two lyrics have sung the Gospel appeal home to many hearts (685, 691).

But there were men in this school also worthy to be matched with these elect women—**James Montgomery** (1771-1854), whose rich legacy to the Church is too large to take full account of here, but the quality of whose gift may be judged by his "Hail to the Lord's Anointed" (154), "Lift up your heads, ye gates of brass" (385), "Stand up and bless the Lord" (233), and "O Spirit of the living God" (386), songs full of both Christian and lyric fire; **Bishop Bickersteth** (1825-1906), who not only wrote fine hymns himself (321, 370, 444), but edited one of the best of the evangelical hymn-books, *The Hymnal Companion to the Book of Common Prayer*;

Dean Alford (1810-71), the great New Testament scholar, whose hymns (221, 579, 619) are like glowing coals brought from the altar by a soul whose whole joy was worship; and our own **Horatius Bonar** (1808-89), who nobly redeems the Presbyterian name from the reproach of lyrical barrenness. We have other singers to our credit, such as **James Drummond Burns**, **John Ross Macduff**, **George Matheson**, **Mrs Cousin**, **Jane Laurie Borthwick**, and her sister, **Sarah Laurie Findlater**; but even if we had no others, this prince of evangelical singers alone, by the range and variety of his inspiration, would enable us to hold up our heads among all the Churches without shame for the contribution Presbyterianism has brought to the common song in which they and we together celebrate God's praise.

It must be remembered that the Presbyterian Churches were later than most in reconciling themselves to the use of hymns. The Relief Church, one of the constituent parts of what is now the United Free Church of Scotland, was the first to make the new departure, so early as 1794. The others were slower to adopt the innovation, and it was only in the last quarter of the nineteenth century that they brought hymns into general use.

The Anglican High Church School.—Until the Oxford Movement was well advanced, the Church of England was reluctant to admit hymns to use in its services. In some dioceses such use was episcopally forbidden. In others, it was introduced by progressive congregations without episcopal sanction. In some quarters there was organised opposition. When **Thomas Cotterill** (1779-1823), (366), for example, introduced into his Sheffield church a first-rate hymn-book, which he and **James Montgomery** had compiled together, he found a much wider and intenser campaign than his own congregation alone could have originated concentrated upon it.

He was summoned to the Consistory Court at York to answer for his unauthorised innovation, and the situation was saved only by an act of astute diplomacy on the part of the Archbishop. Much of the unfriendliness towards hymns was due to the fact that in England they originated with the Dissenters. The fact also that the use of them in the Anglican Church had begun with the Evangelicals prejudiced the minds of High Churchmen against them. But the recovery, thanks to the Romantic Revival, of the ancient office-hymns from the Roman and Eastern liturgies convinced the most unwilling that long before the odious Dissenters and the disliked Evangelicals used them hymns had a place in catholic use. The old prejudices melted away, and without further opposition hymnody moved to its modern place as an accepted and normal element in the Church of England's worship.

Various unsuccessful attempts were made to produce a catholic hymnal to suit the needs of the new liturgical school. None of them found any but a limited acceptance until, in 1861, a group of able men, under the chairmanship of **Sir Henry Williams Baker** (1821-77), produced an epoch-making book, *Hymns Ancient and Modern, for use in the Services of the Church*. It was a compromise-book. It came short of the ultra-High Churchmen's requirements, but advanced a long way to meet them; it established and naturalised the liturgical office-hymn in Anglican use. But it went far to conciliate moderate opinion, and succeeded so well in finding the *via media* between the extremes that it moved at once into wide acceptance.

On the literary side it was of great importance. Sir Henry Baker himself was a very fine hymn-writer: witness his "The King of Love my Shepherd is" (438), "We love the place, O God" (236), "O perfect life of love" (102). And he enlisted many notable contributors

who enriched the book with lyrics now loved in all the Churches—**William Chatterton Dix**, with “As with gladness men of old”; **Keble**, with eight hymns; **John Mason Neale**, with four; **William Walsham How**, with the first earnest of the rich dower from which we have garnered nineteen hymns into the *Hymnary*; **William Whiting**, with “Eternal Father, strong to save”; and, to name no more, **Cecil Frances Alexander**, whose character, her husband, Archbishop Alexander, said, “was based and moulded upon the best teaching of the original Oxford Movement,” though she had little sympathy with mere ritualism, and who has left lyric and Christian treasure beyond price. Later editions brought into the ranks **Thomas Benson Pollock**, the specialist in metrical litanies; **Caroline Maria Noel**, with her “At the name of Jesus”; **Archbishop Maclagan**, **J. S. B. Monsell**, and many more singers of note.

But even more on its musical side this book was revolutionary. The musical editor was **Dr W. H. Monk**, and he not only drew largely on such first-rank Church composers as **Sir John Goss**, **Sir George Elvey**, and **Samuel Sebastian Wesley**, but enlisted younger men whose fame was to be great, and whose example was to set the standard of a new school—**Dr Dykes** most outstanding among them. Their music proved extraordinarily popular, and it governed the musical character of most hymn-books published in the next forty years, including *The Scottish Hymnal* and the first *Church Hymnary*. The attractive qualities of many of the tunes of the new order, however, have not stood well the test of time. It is now felt that tunes of the part-song type, like “Lux Benigna,” and of the cloying lusciousness of others which, because of the love many still have for them, we shall not name, are not the best type for congregational use. The number of them in the new *Hymnary* is less considerably than in

the last, and it is safe to prophesy that the next revision will leave in it fewer still ; but of the stronger tunes from *Hymns Ancient and Modern* it is equally safe to predict that very many of them will stand the test of constant use, with their fine quality undimmed, for generations still.

XXIII

THE AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION

IN its earlier history the Church in America naturally followed the practice in Church praise which prevailed on this side of the Atlantic. There, as here, metrical psalmody long held an unchallenged dominance. The first book of any kind printed in New England was a psalter—*The Bay Psalm Book* of 1640, which, like the Scottish Psalter of 1650, aimed at a close fidelity to the sense of the Hebrew psalms. The cultivation of music, however, was for long totally neglected. In some congregations singing came to be abandoned altogether. In others, through the lack of music and of ability to sing except by memory, all but a few tunes were forgotten, and these, as one writer declared, were “tortured and twisted as every unskilful throat saw fit.” Another writer, in 1721, described the singing he was familiar with as “like five hundred different tunes roared out at the same time,” and in so drawling and slow a style that he himself had “twice in one note paused to take breath.” It was the Great Revival that brought a change for the better. The new interest in vital religion created the desire for a more civilised and evangelical type of worship song. First Watts’s *Psalms Imitated* were published in Boston in 1729, and ten years later the first American reprint of Watts’s *Hymns* appeared. These came into a considerable degree of use.

The first beginning of a distinctive American hymnody came about in the course of a revision of Dr Watts. The Presbyterians of Connecticut entrusted the task of

“accommodating” Dr Watts to America to **Dr Timothy Dwight**, the distinguished President of Yale College, and in 1801 his revised version appeared, with a selection of hymns appended. That Dwight had a true poetic faculty may be discerned from his version of part of the 137th Psalm, which, as Hymn 210 of our collection, is known to us as the favourite hymn, “I love Thy Kingdom, Lord,”—a worthy beginning indeed.

Subsequent developments it is impossible to trace in any detail. The conditions of life in a young and growing country were not favourable to rapid progress in any kind of culture. The remoteness of America from the forces that were at work on this side, producing the changes recorded in previous chapters, resulted in an even more tenacious adherence than in this country to old usages, and a greater reluctance to make any advance on the old system of theological interpretation. In the result we find that the orthodox Churches were not fertile in hymnody. Taking account only of the American hymns we find in the *Hymnary*, what are the Church affiliations of their authors? President Dwight was a Presbyterian. So were **Dr J. W. Alexander** (1804-59), the gifted and distinguished author of the English version of Gerhardt’s hymn, “O sacred Head, sore wounded” (107), and **Dr George Duffield** (1818-88); who wrote “Stand up! stand up for Jesus” (532). **Bishop George Washington Doane** (1799-1859), who wrote “Fling out the banner” (383), and “Thou art the way: to Thee alone” (173), was an Episcopalian, as were also **Charles W. Everest** (1814-77), author of “Take up thy Cross” (501), and **Bishop Arthur Cleveland Coxe** (1818-96), though the latter had a Presbyterian upbringing. **William Cullen Bryant** (1794-1878) had close associations with the Presbyterian Church, and received the impulse to write the slender sheaf of hymns from which 340 is taken, from

his Presbyterian minister. **John Greenleaf Whittier** (1807-92), whose poems yield us seven hymns, was a Quaker. **Dr Ray Palmer** (1808-87), who gave the Church three of its most precious hymns—"Jesus, Thou Joy of loving hearts" (420); "My faith looks up to Thee" (415), and "Jesus, these eyes have never seen" (418)—was a Congregationalist.

Apart from these, the hymns we derive from the same period are all by Unitarians. Here, surely, is a strange thing, for which there must be an exceptional reason. No less does the fact call for explanation that most of the eminent poets of America—Emerson, Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, James Russell Lowell—were of that form of belief. The reason lies in the hard and unrelaxing type of orthodoxy long prevalent in New England. The rigidity of the Calvinistic system, with its dreadful and indeed inhuman implications, knew little relaxation there, and the result was that many of the best minds were driven into revolt and sought refuge in Unitarianism, which offered them at least a more humane conception of God and a kindlier view of life. It followed that that denomination "possessed a large share of the best blood and brain in the most cultivated section of America." Its teaching is not to be judged by that of Unitarianism in this country; it had a much closer affinity with modern orthodoxy here. **Edmund Hamilton Sears**, for instance (1821-76), who wrote "It came upon the midnight clear" (47), stated explicitly that he always preached the Divinity of our Lord. **Oliver Wendell Holmes** (1809-94) acknowledged his preference for "those who believed more rather than those who believed less," and in his later years sought spiritual strength and comfort in the great evangelical hymns. Of most of such writers it is true to say, as the editor of *Lyra Americana* does in his preface: "It would be difficult, or even impossible, to determine the ecclesiastical

or doctrinal status of each writer from the internal evidence afforded by his poetry. The great object of their adoration and their grateful love is Christ crucified. All are one in Him. Differences are merged in a common unity when He is the theme. With 'diversity of gifts' there is but 'one spirit.' 'They know but one Saviour, and one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.' "

This assertion applies to the two writers just named, and to **John White Chadwick** (1840-1904), whose great hymn, "Eternal Ruler of the ceaseless round," to one of Orlando Gibbons's most beautiful tunes, is one of the most welcome accessions to the new *Hymnary* (489), and whose harvest hymn (614) strikes notes which no other such hymn touches. But it requires qualification with regard to three other writers, all of whom took up very definite dogmatic positions on the theistic side—**Samuel Longfellow** (1819-92), brother and biographer of the distinguished poet; his friend and collaborator, **Samuel Johnson** (1822-82); and **Frederick Lucian Hosmer** (b. 1840). Much, however, of their doctrinal position was doubtless to be accounted for by training and environment, and in spite of it they have all given us hymns of exceptional value. Longfellow's "Again as evening's shadow falls" (275), and "The summer days are come again" (612), are already well known, and his "Go forth to life" (672), "Holy Spirit, Truth Divine" (193), and "'Tis winter now" (623), will soon be better known still; and Johnson's "City of God" (209), and Hosmer's splendid "Thy Kingdom come" (153), and not less his hymn of thanksgiving for the blessed dead (331), are gains to us of quite the highest value.

Great-hearted **Bishop Phillips Brooks's** "O little town of Bethlehem" remains, with **W. H. Burleigh's**

“Lead us, O Father, in the paths of peace” (566), and **Mrs Miles’s** “Thou who didst stoop below” (147). And **Washington Gladden’s** “O Master, let me walk with Thee” (339), **William Pierson Merrill’s** robust and challenging “Rise up, O men of God!” (344), and **Charles Herbert Richards’s** “Our Father, Thy dear Name doth show” (486), among the new hymns, make distinctive and very useful additions to the Church’s hymnic resources.

The American Gospel Song.—In the last section of the *Hymnary*, that for Mission Services, there are some hymns that call for special remark—those of which the type was set by the American evangelists Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey. It is an interesting fact that this type of Gospel Song “was born in Newcastle, England, in 1873,” during these men’s first evangelistic campaign. The beginning was very modest—a little *brochure* of sixteen pages, entitled *Sacred Songs and Solos*, but in successive editions the number of hymns included grew to very large proportions. Commercially, the venture, which was entered upon at Moody’s personal risk, proved enormously successful. Consequently, it found many imitators. As years went on, no evangelistic mission was considered adequately equipped unless it had its own collection of hymns of the same type. Writers arose with an inexhaustible gift of turning out the kind of verse required. **Mrs Van Alstyne (Fanny Crosby)** had contracts for a supply of a given number of hymns a week, and produced in all about 8000. Deterioration, even in a standard which to begin with was not high, resulted. Innumerable combinations of sentimental verse and meretricious “music” were, largely for commercial reasons, published broadcast, and proved highly profitable. It is difficult to say just where the lowest depth was touched, but probably the so-called “Glory Song,”

with its recurring refrain of "That will be glory, glory for me!" reached the ultimate nadir of unevangelical egotism.

But the type does not deserve a sweeping condemnation. Sankey, in his way, was a great artist, if we regard him as "an expert musical elocutionist," possessed of a remarkable power of communicating his own emotions to great concourses of people by means of the simple songs and melodies he employed. No one who heard him could doubt his deep sincerity. "Before I sing I must feel," he said, "and the hymn must be of a kind that I know can send home what I feel to the hearts of those who listen." This gave him his power: his song was from heart to heart, and it seldom failed to find its way. He was a pure sentimentalist. If Hymn 683, the author's version except in the closing line, be compared with the form in which it appears in *Sacred Songs and Solos* as Sankey altered it, it will be seen that every change he made was in the direction of an increased sentimentality, by which he could make a more direct assault on the emotions of his audience. This characteristic made his songs a perfect foil to the unsentimental, shrewd, practical common sense of his collaborator Moody's oratory; the two men made a powerful combination.

The hymns he used, with their lilting, ballad-like measures and obvious message or appeal were matched by equally obvious melodies with a rhythmic swing and flow, and at once these captivated the people. They stood at the extreme of contrast with the familiar grave and solemnising psalmody. It is undeniable that among them there were hymns of "homely *naïveté* and even beauty." If the critical sense is silenced, their emotional appeal is irresistible, and if the ends of the Gospel are attained through a stirring of the emotions, criticism should un-

doubtedly be restrained. "Without doubt," said J. S. Curwen, "these songs touch the common throng; they match the words to which they are sung, and carry them. The American Gospel Hymn is nothing if not emotional. It takes a simple phrase and repeats it over and over again. There is no reasoning, nor are the lines made heavy with introspection. 'Tell me the story simply, as to a little child.' The feelings are touched; the stiffest of us become children again."

It must be admitted also—a curious fact—that Sankey did more than any man to reconcile the Scottish people to the introduction of organs. As Mr Curwen says again, "He superseded argument by making people feel that organs were consistent with devotion and helpful to it."

But there is no doubt at all that a deterioration in taste follows the use of this type of hymn and tune; it fosters an attachment to the trivial and sensational which dulls and often destroys all sense of the dignity and beauty which best befit the song that is used in the service of God. For this reason some alternative is much to be desired. If it be true that their vogue has resulted largely from the craving of the people for folk-music, and that in the lack of such music they have welcomed this substitute, there is abundant justification for the increasing use of folk-melodies in hymnody, of which Dr Vaughan Williams, in *The English Hymnal*, set the example. A number of such tunes are in the present *Hymnary*. There are evidences that the day of the "Gospel Song" of the Sankey type is passing. The advance in education and musical culture should soon render it obsolete. Meantime its place is solely in the evangelistic meeting, and even there it should have a place only until the taste for something worthier has been created. And that day need not be distant. Let the best be given that is suited to

such a purpose, and it will be found that the long sway of the "Gospel Song" has been due to an illusion; experience will show that the people are responsive to better things if only they are invited and taught to sing them.

XXIV

SOME DISTINCTIVE NOTES IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY HYMNODY

POETRY has been described as "the cream of a people's thought." In religious verse, therefore, we may look for the cream of its thought upon the highest subject of all. Or, if that be held to pitch expectation beyond reason, we may look there at least for some indication of the directions in which religious thought is tending. What indications of such a kind can we discover in hymnody to-day?

There is a new concern about the artistry of the Church's song. In a time of high literary culture and accomplishment it is to be expected that a desire should be shown to give the religious lyric as perfect a form as consecrated art can shape for it. There has not always been a keen sensitiveness of conscience on such a point. The eighteenth century was the age of the homiletical hymn. The thought then was less of worship than of ensuring that a hymn would point a moral or drive the message of a sermon home. So long as that purpose was reasonably well effected, the literary form was a matter of second or third importance. But such hymns could not live, unless something higher than the didactic, preaching spirit passed into them; those of them that survive do so in virtue of something else than the temporary purpose infusing vitality into them. If one glances over any eighteenth-century collection, it is impossible not to be struck by the fact that the vast majority of the hymns

contained in it are dead beyond redemption—no one could sing them now; and the proportion of hymns that have lasted is very small. James Montgomery's protest in 1825, in the preface to his *Christian Psalmist*, against the "negligence, feebleness, and prosing" of the hymnody then current, was only too well warranted. There was great need for the awakening of a new sense of artistic propriety in the shaping of what should be the Church's offering to God.

Exactly a century ago, in 1827, Bishop Heber's hymn-book appeared with the avowed intention that it should be a collection of sacred poetry, bringing hymnody artistically into line with the lyrical excellence of the non-religious poetry of the time. His book was little used, but his own hymns were absorbed into other collections, and the example he gave has never since been forgotten. The high literary standard he set has been followed and maintained by many writers of the nineteenth century, such as **Henry Francis Lyte** (1793-1847), whose great hymns, "Abide with me" (286), and "Praise, my soul, the King of heaven" (21), and others, are among the classics; **John Ellerton** (1826-95), who, deliberately holding himself aloof from the divisive influences which were active in the Church, set at the service of all contending parties hymns of rare excellence, expressing the faith that was common to them all; **Godfrey Thring** (1823-1903), who not only wrote hymns of great literary and spiritual value himself, but published *A Church of England Hymn Book* as a protest against the system of party collections which was doing much to accentuate the divisions in the Church; and **William Walsham How** (1823-97), whose life, like Whittier's, was itself "a canticle of love" as beautiful as any of his admirable and much-loved hymns.

In the twentieth century the literary conscience of which these men gave the example has exercised a refining

influence on the newer hymn-collections, and has led those who edited them both to close the door so far as they could against literary unworthiness, and to open it to lyrics against which, a generation ago, it would have been barred. Thus, for example, **Milton** is represented here by a portion of his *Ode on the Nativity*; thousands will rejoice at the inclusion of **Blake's Jerusalem**; there are some of **Christina Rossetti's** delicate and lovely verses, albeit they are better fitted for private than for public use. Among living writers of note **Laurence Housman** and **Rudyard Kipling** find a place.

But special note should be made of the contribution of the Poet Laureate, **Dr Robert Bridges**. The public does not know him as a great hymnologist, but in his *Yattendon Hymnal* he has made what is easily the most distinguished individual contribution to hymnody in our time. Of the hymns reproduced in the *Hymnary* from it, only one (250) is wholly his own; the others are translations—partly so at least, for he holds it to be the right of a translator to treat the version he makes in such a way as to ensure for it an artistic unity, and at the same time to accommodate it to the requirements of the music, to which the words “owe a courtesy,” he says. Possibly sometimes George Macdonald's criticism of Dean Milman's hymns may seem applicable here—“refined, scholarly, sometimes rich and even gorgeous in expression, yet lacking that radiance of the unutterable to which the loftiest words owe their grandest power.” Yet these hymns, from so finished an artist's hand, and set to the tunes it was his chief aim to revive, add to the *Hymnary* a new and welcome splendour.

Another note of twentieth-century hymnody which is markedly discernible is the prominence given in it to **hymns of the Kingdom**. In the last edition of the *Hymnary* the balance was not kept, in a way at least to

satisfy present-day thought, between hymns of the Second Coming and hymns which sing of the Church's faith in the continual coming of Christ in His spiritual Kingdom. In this edition the balance is truer to the teaching of Holy Scripture. There is a welcome addition to hymns of the latter type in Milton's "The Lord will come and not be slow" (151), in F. L. Hosmer's "Thy Kingdom come" (153), and Montgomery's "Hail to the Lord's Anointed" (154) transferred to this use from the Missionary Section, where, in a longer form, it stood in the last *Hymnary* practically unused. And no section of the book has been more enriched than that which provides hymns for all types of the Service of the Kingdom.

The present age has witnessed a great **stirring of the social conscience**. In many directions the desire expresses itself to realise in human society the ideal of the Kingdom of God. No hymn-book in modern conditions would be adequate for the utterance of the Church's dream and aspiration or for the inspiring of its endeavour, unless it provided for a liberal expression of social sympathy and the Christian ideal of the brotherhood of man. Dr George Matheson once complained of the lack of this very note in the hymn-collections of his day. "To my mind," he said, "they have one great defect; they lack humanitarianism. There is any amount of doctrine in the Trinity, Baptism, Atonement (Sections), or the Christian life as such, but what of the secular life—the infirmary, the hospital, the home of refuge? . . . I don't think our hymns will ever be what they ought to be until we get them inspired by a sense of the enthusiasm of, and for, humanity. It is rather a theological point perhaps, but the hymnists speak of the surrender to Christ. They forget that Christ is not simply an individual. He is Head of a body, the body of humanity; and it no longer expresses the idea correctly to join yourself to Christ only;

you must give yourself to the whole brotherhood of man to fulfil the idea." The lack to which he referred has now been made good. There is no phase of the enthusiasm of humanity—the spirit of brotherhood, social service, temperance propaganda, evangelistic effort, missionary endeavour, the promotion of the international spirit, the ideal of the League of Nations—for which a medium of expression is not provided. Every vital movement which aims at the advancement of the Kingdom by the realisation of some ideal of social good will find in the *Hymnary* some modern hymn to give its enthusiasm and its prayer a voice.

One other note in present-day hymnody deserves remark—**its accentuation of the idea of worship**. The homiletical, didactic idea which was behind most of the early English hymnody has fallen into the background. The range of any hymn-collection has now to be very wide; a glance at its list of contents will show how far-reaching and comprehensive it must be. But its chief office must ever be to encourage and aid worship; its end is first the offering of praise to God. Everything else is subsidiary. Nothing else is in place unless in some way it helps the spirit to rise in thought and faith and hope to God. The hymn-writer's service is not rendered if the singing of his verses does not lift the singers' souls into some mood of aspiration or worship. Dr Martineau, in the preface to his *Hymns for Church and Home*, puts this point finely: "We must not forgo the glorious power which art exercises in worship. Its peculiar function in connexion with religion is to substitute for the poor and low thoughts of ordinary men, the solemn and vivid images of things invisible that have revealed themselves to loftier souls, and to present the objects of faith before the general mind in something of that aspect under which they rise up before the great artists of poetry and sound. These

gifted men are to lift us ; we are not to depress them. In sacred music we acknowledge this principle at once ; we confess that it is a noble thing, when we think of the origin of things, and call God the Creator, to have within us the mighty transitions of Haydn's genius instead of our own puny dreams ; to have the incidents of sacred story glow and live before us at the touch of a power like that of Handel or Spohr ; to find ourselves, at such bidding, with the ' Shepherds abiding in the field,' not far from the holy chant falling on the midnight air ; or to hear in a voice, melting as Christ's, ' Come unto Me, ye weary ' ; or, as we pass from bereavement to bereavement of this world, to be haunted, as with a sudden peace, by the echo of that unearthly strain, ' Blest are the departed.' Not less elevating is the poetry than the melody of faith, when it is equally left alone with its first fresh power, and not reduced halfway to prose as a condition of its entrance into worship."

Hymns, therefore, are meant to give the spirit wings to mount into high thoughts and moods to which it could not rise alone. Above all, it is their office to help the soul to rise to God. And it is good that modern hymnody is directed largely toward this end. The early nineteenth century saw the Renascence of Wonder. The early twentieth sees a genuine Renascence of Worship. All the Churches have had their conscience quickened to a truer sense of the purpose of the public offices of religion. Once, and for long, the sermon dominated the service, and praise and prayer were regarded as subordinate and merely accessory to it. Now it is given its due place and proper proportion, and the offering of the people's corporate devotion advances to its due and primary place. For every phase of such devotion the *Hymnary* provides. Its end would be missed if at every point it did not foster and express the spirit of divine worship. But of such a failure

there will be no danger if with every hymn they are asked to sing those who use it hear the mystic voice whisper within them, "Lift up your hearts," and if inwardly and reverently they make answer, as they prepare for the act of devotion, "We lift them up unto the Lord."

It has been said that even instruments without life will not speak the true notes of power unless the touch of faith is on them and the breath of holy feeling is in them. Much more the song of living voices will be void of power unless it is the utterance of sincere religious faith and emotion. But when it is so inspired it streams out of feeling into feeling, a holy tide upon whose face moves the Holy Spirit of God. It becomes a divine ministry then. It brings to the worshippers gifts from God. It gives hints, breaths, gleams of worlds too little realised. It inspires and nurtures faith and breathes strength into the spirit, and makes the earthly sanctuary a forecourt of heaven, a place of the presence and the power of God. Let all who use the rich materials of the Church's praise endeavour to use them always as the voice of a living devotion, and the common song will become the means of a true revival of religion, the breath of a quickening spirit for the Church of God.

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